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ORAL HISTORY

ELAINE BLACK YONEDA

California Historical Society
Women in California Collection

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Oral History of

Elaine Black Yoneda

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STATISTICAL INFORMATION ON ELAINE BLACK YONEDA

For the California Historical Society
Women in California Collection

Oral History Interview

Name Elaine Black Yoneda Date of Birth 9/4/06

Place of birth New York City, N.Y.

Name of husband Karl Goso Yoneda aka Karl Hama

Date of marriage 11/5/35 Place of Marriage Seattle, Wash

5/26/33 is the date celebrated. Started living together then.
If marriage terminated, when _____

~~If remarried~~, name of ^{former} husband Edward Frances Russell, Jr. aka Ed Black

Date of ^{first} remarriage 1/12/25 Place Los Angeles, CA

Divorced 1/18/34

Children

Name Joyce Russell Date of Birth 7/27/27

Name Thomas Culbert Yoneda Date of Birth 1/10/39

Name _____ Date of Birth _____

Name _____ Date of Birth _____

Parents

Mother (maiden name) Mollie Kvetnay

Where born Russia Date of Birth 2/28/85

Date of Death 12/28/70

Father's name S. Nathan Buchman

Where born Russia Date of Birth 5/25/1883

Date of Death 2/1/75

Date of Marriage 1905 Place of Marriage New York

Grandparents

Mother's side Name of father Rueben Kvetnay

Date of birth unknown Date of Death XXXX

Name of Mother (maiden) Rachel (unknown)

Date of birth unknown Date of Death late 1928 or '29

(see next page)

Stateistical information on Elaine Black Yoneda

Grandparents (cont'd)

Father's side

Russian name was Label. Known as
Label the Deaf.

Name of father Louis Buchman

Date of Birth 1841 Date of Death 1935

Name of Mother (maiden) Celia Gold

Date of birth 1852 Date of Death 1921

My Brothers and Sisters

Name Abraham L. Buchman Date of Birth 2/27/09

Date of Death _____

Name _____ Date of Birth _____

Date of Death _____

Name _____ Date of Birth _____

Date of Death _____

Comments _____

Oral History of ELAINE BLACK YONEDA

Born: September 4, 1906

Now living in her home in San Francisco, California

Interviews held on: February 23, 1976
March 8, 1976
March 22, 1976
March 28, 1977
May 21, 1977
May 30, 1977
June 24, 1977

Time of Interview: Approximately 14 hours

Interviewer: Lucy Kendall

For the California Historical Society Library, Women in California Collection, under auspices of Manuscript Department, Lynn Bonfield Donovan (formerly Manuscript Librarian, now Honorary Curator, Women in California Collection).

General Topic

The purpose of the interview was to obtain Yoneda's background, schooling, early life, marriages, and involvement in the left wing movement of the thirties. Then to develop her activities and motivations as an official of the International Labor Defense, and as a member of the Communist Party, particularly her thinking and opinions as a woman leader during that period.

The following is a transcript of the two series of interviews. The first set was made early in 1976 when interviewer was more enthusiastic than competent in the field of oral history. The second made the following year covered more fully some aspects of Elaina Yoneda's life experiences, and obtained more of her personal opinions.

Conduct of the Interview

The interviews were all conducted in the home of the Yonedas in the Outer Mission District of San Francisco. It is a comfortable home, cluttered with a good many mementoes of their extensive travels and their interests. A beautiful garden is carefully tended by Mr. Yoneda who is more than generous with its yield.

The second series was interrupted for a few months while Mrs. Yoneda recovered from a heart attack suffered while attending an ILWU Convention in Washington.

Interview History - Elaine Black Yoneda - page two

Mr. Yoneda was in the house during many sessions, and was always available for information on dates and experiences.

The Yonedas have some files, and were able to refer to them. Unfortunately some of their records are missing as they were not able to recover those left with some friends when the family was incarcerated in Manzanar.

Editing

There was minor editing done in the typing of the transcript. The only additional editing was done by the narrator. The first section has been retyped. The second session, done in 1977, is the ribbon copy with changes made by Mrs. Yoneda.

The Interviewee

Elaine is short, and now slim as a result of a stringent diet due to her doctor's orders after her heart attack. She seems to have boundless energy; is enthusiastic, vivacious, and an excellent public speaker devoted to the various causes she embraces, and active in the organizations to which she belongs.

Karl Yoneda is the scholar of the family - an expert on Asian-American labor history and on Japanese-American labor history. He is often called upon to lecture at various colleges and high schools in the State. Elaine accompanies him most of the time. They are both also in great demand for discussion on their experiences during World War II when in the Manzanar Concentration Camp. Students are also interested in Karl's activities as a member of the O.W.I. Psychological Warfare Team in China, Burma and India (C.B.I.). A full coverage of this aspect of their lives has been documented in an oral history taken by Fullerton State.

Many women in California (more so, the interviewer has been told, than in the rest of the country) came into leadership in the left wing movement. This could be due to California being one of the most Western States in the Union and not so tied to rigid concepts. Certainly organizations (even left wing ones) reflect the qualities of the area in which they function. Left wing organizations had a policy of equality of the sexes which may or may not have been implemented by practice. This is, naturally, one of the questions asked in this series. Elaine Yoneda is one of these women. Her life has been a hectic and active one, starting with her joining the International Labor Defense. She is still active (despite her recent illness) in such organizations as the ILWU Women's Auxiliary, in the Office Workers Union, in Union W.A.G.E., in support of Wendy Yoshimura, the Wilmington Ten, and so forth. Both Yonedas are ardent supporters of the People's World, and celebrated their 45th wedding anniversary by raising funds for the paper.

Narrative Account of the Interview

The interviews follow more or less chronologically her life. Although raised by a radical mother and father (their activities were either kept secret or Elaine did not recognize them) her own awareness did not take place until she had seen police brutality at a mass unemployed demonstration in Los Angeles. She developed rapidly into a civil rights leader in the International Labor Defense, an organization for the defense of political and trade union prisoners, including deportees. She became known as the "Red Angel" during the 1934 waterfront strike in San Francisco, and as the "Tiger Girl" in Salinas during an agricultural strike.

She has had two marriages, a child resulting from each one. When she and her first husband parted company Elaine travelled to San Francisco and became involved with the I.L.D. here. She lived with, and then married, Karl Yoneda.

The second series of interviews fleshes out the first in obtaining more detailed information on her early life, her activities, the nature of the I.L.D., etc. Instead of cutting and inserting this information, it is left as a separate section, the index to the transcript covering both sections.

Mrs. Yoneda was extremely cooperative and helpful in the course of the interview, as was Mr. Yoneda. He often interrupted his own work to come and give a hand in "jogging" memories.

The Yonedas are an unusually close couple, now the proud grandparents of two girls whom they hope to take on a visit to Japan soon.

No Equal Rights Amendment is needed in this home. Everything seems to be shared. This seems true of a good many left-wing couples of the thirties where the practice of their theory of equality evidently did "begin at home."

Lucy Kendall
Interviewer
June 8, 1978

Yoneda, Elaine Black, 1906 -

Papers, 1931-1939 1 box, all xerox copies

Includes her resumé, material from her candidacy for the San Francisco Board of Supervisors, 1939, International Labor Defense documents, and newspaper clippings.

Gift of Elaine Yoneda, 1976

Added entries: Bridges, Harry
Gallagher, Leo
Lumber & Sawmill Workers Union, Eureka
- Mine, Mill & Smelter Workers Union,
Local 48
Salinas Lettuce Strike, 1936
Trade-Union
Women in California
Women in Trade-Unions
1931-1939
Strike

Yoneda, Elaine Black, 1906- . . .

Folder	1	Biographical material, resume
	2	Material from Candidacy for the S.F. Board of Supervisors, 1939
	3	International Labor Defense, 1931-1939
	4	Newspaper clippings, 1934-1939

We Salute the 45th Anniversary of Elaine Black & Karl Yoneda

PEOPLE'S WORLD
SATURDAY, APRIL 29, 1978

Participants in the struggle against oppression and racism and for workers' rights and peace—

ILWU Members

A Local 10 Member
Alex & Harriet Bagwell
Bill Proctor
Larry Wing
Leo Robinson
Irma & Urho Tuominen
Dave Stewart
Don Watson
Roy O
A Wilmington Brother
A San Pedro Docker
A Local 10 Member
A Checker
A Walker
A SF Stevedore

ILWU Pensioners

Harry Rice
Marin Old Timer
A SF Pensioner
Local 6 Pensioner & Wife
Al Bertani
Bill Goheen
The Kendalls
Henry & Corrine Massy
Germain & Helen Bulcke
Archie & Hon Brown
Al Metzgar
E. Wood
Alma Haapla
Emily Samit
J. Sylvia
J. Salazar
Bill Bailey
SF Friend & Wife
East Bay Old Timer
Sonoma County Retiree
Another Old Timer

Office Workers

A 29er
Another 29er
Orphie Rees
Millie Huey
Another 29er
Still Another 29er
Joyce Maupin

Ode To Our 45th Anniversary

*This May marks 45 years of our "union"
Year after year of understanding and love
Along with some quarrels, building our foundation
As hand in hand, we journey toward a new world*

*When I was beaten and arrested way back in '31
During an LA unemployed demonstration and
Elaine Black, secretary of the ILD, came to
Bail me out—was the beginning of a comradeship*

*We went to courts, meetings and farms
Visiting strikers and political prisoners
Gathering defense and bail funds from poor and rich
In behalf of deportees, miners and the Scottsboro 9*

*Among the indelible events are the '34 maritime strike
Elaine at Stewart and Mission as bullets came zooming
From police guns on that "Bloody Thursday" and
I running for a SF assembly seat on the CP ticket*

*She jailed 8 times, tried on "vag" and other charges
For speaking out against the CS law, injustice and fascism
Labeled the "tiger girl" by the Hearst press and
Called the "red angel" in the Western Worker*

*Free Mooney cries ringing here, in London, Paris and Moscow
On January 7, '39 Mooney became a free man and
Marched up Market Street along with 50,000 men and women
He was godfather to our son, Tom born 3 days later!*

*We picketed ships loading scrap iron for Japan
Then Pearl Harbor! Evacuation found us in Manzanar, after I
Enlisted from behind its barbed wire to fight fascist Japan
Elaine and Tom had to face the December 6, '42 rioters*

*We contributed to the defeat of the fascist Axis—
Victory was soon overtaken by the cold war at home
Dark days with its "red scare" and our son asking
"Will we be sent to a concentration camp again?"*

*The McCarthy era ended but killing began in Vietnam
We joined peace marches in SF, LA and Washington, DC
In Tokyo under the banner of "No More Hiroshimas" and
World Peace Forces Congress in snow-covered Moscow*

*That war stopped but racism and oppression survive
We support ethnic studies of minorities in this country
Lecture on Asian labor history and our evacuation story
Joined Free Angela and Wilmington Ten demonstrations*

*Our 45-years has been a long path filled with tears and love.
Elaine in offices and I on piers toiled for posterity
Now pensioners, we follow the sun that shines over children
Of all races in a world of struggle for peace and socialism*

No. Cal. ILWU
Federated Aux.
District Council
ILWU Aux. #16
San Francisco

Aux. Members

Mabel & Ernie Baugh
Bessie Robertson
Virginia Yang
Margaret Pryor
Estelle Hawkins
Mary Whitley
Clydenia Austin
Joyce Bockes
D & J

More Friends

Isaac Zafrani
Francis McTernan
Sarah Gorlick
Ruth & Joe Hammer
Kiyo & Paul
Tomoko & Karl
Marion & Lloyd Wake
A Hilo Friend
Doris Brin Walker
Bob & Sima
Teamster Friends
Kimi & Gene
A SF Newspaperman
Mendocino Friends
Peggy & John
Mickie & Helen Lima
Harold Ono
Jack Kimoto, Honolulu
Sonia B. Kaross
Anne Loftis
An LA Friend
A Railroad Friend
T. Murata
M. Yashima
Karen & Carl
Finnish Friends
A SF Friend
Sue Kunitomi Embrey
Lonnie Healy
Vivian & Leo Raineri
Relatives
June Fisher & the
East Coast Family
Tom Yoneda
Tamara & Yvonne Yoneda
Joyce Evangelista

SAN FRANCISCO

May Day and Anniversary Greetings to Elaine & Karl Yoneda

In many ways we are your children
Children that you have loved...nurtured...
And in the finest of Communist tradition taught...

The profoundness of life
The beauty of people our heritage and class
That we too are part of the great revolution
That is in the process of giving birth to a
New and better world for
Peace, Liberation and Socialism
Thank you

—Bill

Asian Commission
No. California Communist Party

PEOPLE'S WORLD SATURDAY, MAY 6, 1978

WASHINGTON

May Day Greetings to

Comrade Elaine and Karl

With Pride we honor your dedication to
the struggles of the oppressed and working class
for Peace and Socialism and with
International Working Class Solidarity

Ferdinand Smith (waterfront) Club
Washington State Communist Party

SAN FRANCISCO

MAY DAY and HAPPY 40th BIRTHDAY GREETINGS TO THE PW and

Hearty Thanks to Our Co-workers and Friends
Who Greeted Our 45th Anniversary

Elaine & Karl Yoneda

PEOPLE'S WORLD SATURDAY, APRIL 29, 1978

SAN FRANCISCO

FOR ELAINE & KARL

THE RUGWEAVERS OF KUJAN-BULAK
HONOR LENIN

Comrade Lenin has been honored
Often and plentifully. There are busts and statues.
Cities and children have been named after him.
Speeches have been given in many languages,
Meetings held, and demonstrations
From Shanghai to Chicago, in honor of Lenin.
But this is the way the rugweavers
Honored him in Kujan-Bulak,
A small community in southern Turkestan:

Twenty rugweavers live there, in the evening
As they sit on their humble weaving stools they are racked
with fever.

Fever spreads: the railroad station
Is filled with buzzing clouds of mosquitoes
Which arise from the swamp behind the old camel yard.
But the railroad, which
Brings water and smoke very two weeks, brings
One day the news as well

That Lenin Memorial Day is coming.
And the people of Kujan-Bulak decide,
Poor weavers that they are,
That also in their community a plaster bust
Of Comrade Lenin should be set up.
But as they collect the money for the bust
They are all

Racked with fever and count
Their hard-earned kopecks with shaking hands.
And the Red Army man, Stepa Gamelev, who
Is counting carefully and paying close attention,
Sees the readiness to honor Lenin and is glad,
But he also sees the unsteady hands.
And he suddenly makes the proposal
That they buy petroleum with the money for the bust of Lenin
And pour it in the swamp behind the camel yard
From which the mosquitoes come which
Carry the fever.
Thus they would both fight the fever in Kujan-Bulak and
mightily
Honor the dead but
Not to be forgotten
Comrade Lenin.

They agreed to it. On Memorial Day they carried
Their battered buckets filled with black petroleum,
One after another,
And poured it over the swamp.

Thus they helped themselves while honoring Lenin and
Honored him while helping themselves and likewise
They understood him.

We have heard how the people of Kujan-Bulak
Honored Lenin. Then in the evening of the day
When the petroleum was bought and poured over the swamp
A man arose in their assembly and he wanted
A tablet set up in the railroad station
With a notice of this event, containing the details
Of both the altered plan and the exchange
Of the Lenin bust for the fever-destroying barrels of petroleum.
And all of this in honor of Lenin.
And they did this, too,
And put up the tablet.

—BERTOLT BRECHT
SF Transport Club, CPUSA

UNION
WOMEN'S
ALLIANCE
TO GAIN
EQUALITY

UNION W.A.C.

P.O. BOX 462, BERKELEY, CALIFORNIA 94701

WALLER PRESS  192

25

IWC Hearings:

PROTECTIVE LAW IN GRAVE

EDITORIAL

STATEMENT BY UNION WAGE EXECUTIVE BOARD

The Industrial Welfare Commission's attack on protective laws in California, one of the few states where a substantial body of protective legislation still exists, emphasizes again that employers in this country are engaged in a major offensive against the organizations and living standards of working people. Workers at the bottom, most of them women and minorities, have become the first victims of their attack. Women workers are losing many of the benefits which were won by American labor during a hundred years of bitter struggle. If we lose, the wages and working conditions of our brothers will also be undermined.

Health hazards are increasing as the energy crisis provides an excuse to do away with the inadequate safeguards which exist. In the name of equality, the length of the working day is being extended indefinitely. In order to hold their jobs, men and women are being forced to work to the point where fatal industrial accidents occur and where total exhaustion destroys their health, yet neither the Occupation-



to be affected because few of us have the advantage of union organization. Union WAGE calls upon the labor movement to mobilize against the employer attack, to organize the unorganized, to lead the fight to

Elaine Black Yoneda speaking at funeral of Tom Mooney, March 8, 1942

Negative #21476



Charles Gordon



Charles Gordon

Angelo Herndon

Elaine (Black) Yoneda

Newall Johnson

November 20th, 1934

Filed under "Yoneda" - Negative #21453

California Historical Society
Women in California Collection

Interview with ELAINE BLACK YONEDA

Interviewer: Lucy Kendall

Transcriber: Lucy Kendall

Monday, February 23, 1976

Ken: When were you born?

Yon: September 4, 1906, in Manhattan, New York.

Ken: Where were your parents born?

Yon: They were Russian Jews. They were born in the State of Minsk under the rule of the Czar. Dad came here in 1904 to avoid service in the Czar's army. They were childhood sweethearts; both worked in the match factory, and they knew each other since she was nine and he was ten. He sent for her, and she came to this country in 1905.

Ken: How many brothers and sisters did you have?

Yon: I have a brother two and a half years younger than I am. He was born in Connecticut, so he is a Connecticut Yankee.

Ken: Were they very poor when they came here?

Yon: Yes, they were. Dad was a barber. He tried working in the Pennsylvania coal mines when I was nine months old, but it was too hard and too damp. Then they moved to Waterbury. (This is all hearsay. I was just a babe in arms). So we lived in Connecticut where my brother was born. Then we moved to Brooklyn, New York, where I spent my time until I was almost fourteen.

Ken: Did you go to school there?

Yon: I graduated from Public School 178 in the "Brownsville", primarily a Jewish section.

I did spend a year in Russia when I was five years old. My mother took my brother and I *me* there to see her parents. She had vowed that ~~she~~ *she* would come back and show ~~them~~ *them* that she hadn't just run away from them. And we stayed there almost a year, and then came back.

Ken: Were you hungry when you were a child?

Yon: We really didn't suffer from that because mother also worked. She was a model in a shirtwaist factory. She was very beautiful, and she was a perfect 36. Not like me. She was tall, and very stately. And dad worked in a barber shop. Then he and a brother-in-law opened up a small barber shop. As a child I always used to wonder - his shop always seemed to be nice and clean, and he had a card in the corner. About four doors away there was another barber shop. Every once in a while there used to be a broken window. And he said, "People don't really like that man. He is against the workers. He accumulates all the wealth he can and he doesn't want to pay his workers a fair wage." Although dad's was a small shop, week ends they used to hire a barber at union wages. That's what the card in the window was - a union card.

Ken: What were the politics of your father?

Yon: I found out years and years afterwards that they had been in the underground Bund, which was primarily Russians of Jewish extraction who were against the Czar. You might call them nineteen fivers. Had they been in Russia at the time they probably would have been participants in that aborted revolution.

Ken: Did they discuss politics around you when you were going to grammar school?

Yon: For a while they sent me to the Socialist Sunday School, which was held on Sunday at the union headquarters or the Socialist Party headquarters. It is very hazy in my mind.

I remember the May Day parades. Particularly what I remember is the Bakers Union in their white aprons and hats carrying a challah. The challah is a braid twist that Jewish people bake. To me it seemed like it was more than a block long. It looked like a hundred or more people carrying that challah. It was a symbol of their trade. Of course the various union labels were carried on banners. There were long parades on May 1st.

Ken: That was May 1st - Maymarket?

Yon: Yes. It was a holiday that was born in this nation that now they call a Communist plot. It was born in this country and adopted by workers all over the world.

Ken: Were you raised in the Jewish faith?

Yon: No. My parents were not religious. My grandparents were. They were orthodox Jews, and they lived in Manhattan. My dad's day off, because the shop was always open on Sunday, was Thursday. After school he would take my mother, my brother and I, and we would go to Manhattan to visit my grandparents. Across the street lived a great aunt and uncle - an aunt to my mother. They lived on East 13th Street. At that time he (my grandfather) was already too old to work. He died at the age of 94, the early thirties, so he was fairly old when he came over here.

Ken: You had a large family?

Yon: My mother had one sister in this country. My dad had three sisters and a brother. The brother lived in Pennsylvania, and two of the sisters were in California. The other sister's husband was partners with my father in the barber shop.

My father had another sister, his oldest sister, who lived in the Bronx. She had three children, two boys older and a girl that was a couple of years younger than I. I remember visiting their home in the Bronx, and they had a hill on which we could coast. They didn't have hills in Brooklyn, which was flat. And I would go down the hill on the sled in the winter.

Of course when there were the Holy Holidays most of the family gathered at my grandparents. We did not observe them at home. We did not have a kosher home. I really don't know too much about religion. My dad used to tell me that when I became eighteen, if I wanted to become a nun he would help me. Until I was eighteen I was to have nothing to do with any organized religion because he had had some very sad experiences. He didn't go into it at the time. He would also tell my brother that if he wanted to become a priest he would help him become a priest, but at that juncture in our lives we were to have nothing to do with organized religion.

When the Jewish holidays came, most of my classmates were Jewish. However there were a few Italians, and they would not come to school on Jewish holidays either. But I would have to go to school. In my own class, if the teacher wasn't there - there was a teacher by the name

Yon: of Dorothy Harding who was my fourth grade teacher - and I would have to go to her class.

One day I played hookey. When I came home my dad asked me how Dorothy was. He was very fond of her because she had taken our class, after the Maypole dance in the park, to her home to tea - a very elegant home. It was the first time any of the children had ever been in a beautiful home. The first lily of the valley I ever saw was in her back yard. Those of us who could afford it had a geranium plant on our fire escape. Otherwise we didn't even have that. So to see a real live flower, and having her say, "This is a lily of the valley, and this is a lilac" was fantastic. It made an impression. So when I came home and told my dad, he was fond of her because she had thought enough of her class. He thought that was the way education should be, to show the niceties of life. So he always thought of her on a first name basis, and would ask, "How's Dorothy?" So when I said "I didn't see her today," he said, "What is the matter. Is she sick?" And I said, "No. I didn't go to school." So he asked, "Where did you go?" A classmate of mine, a girl whose father ran a fish market across the street, and I had gone to the synagogue. We wanted to hear the Shofar blown. Don't ask me why I wanted to. But the kids were talking about how it made a different sound from anything we had ever heard. It was the only time my father ever spanked me. He slapped me and said "I don't want you to have anything to do with religion until you are eighteen. And if you go to school, you go to school. If you don't want to go to school, stay home."

Ken: Where did you go to high school?

Yon: After I graduated from grammar school (the eighth grade) we moved to California. I went to San Diego High School. I guess I was always sort of a rebel. I always wanted to be a nurse. Since I was going to graduate before I was eighteen, my parents had to sign a consent form for me to go to nursing school. They said, no they didn't want their daughter to be a nurse. They said to do something else, or go on to college, but not to nursing. I said, "If you are not going to let me be a nurse, I won't bring home a diploma." So I quit in my senior year, and went to business college instead. I became an office worker - a secretary.

Ken: job? Who did you work for and how did you get a

Yon: I went to Woodbury Business College. I was signed up for a nine month's course, but graduated in three and a half months. They had, at that time, a service where they would call employers and say they had graduates in in and that. It is quite a big institution now, I understand. It is in Los Angeles. We had moved to Los Angeles after I said I wasn't going to go on in high school.

When we came to California my dad opened up a small dry goods department store, and had a saleswoman. She was of Mexican descent, and I picked up a little bit of Spanish, but it hasn't stayed with me. The salary my dad paid was always the union scale. Whether there was a union in that industry or not, he would talk around until he found the union scale. So there was always that background. If you are doing anything, you do it not just for your own good - even though he was petty-bourgeoisie, little business and things like that. And mother helped in the store.

Ken: One question before we go on. How did World War I affect you?

Yon: All I can remember is knitting khaki scarfs and washrags. I remember that there was a shortage of coal, and there was a very severe winter in 1919 and 1920. Public School 178 I was going to was closed down and was amalgamated with another school because of the coal shortage. There was no way of heating the school. So I was going to school about two miles away. There was a terrific blizzard. As I was walking to school I walked into a great big snow bank, and someone saw my feet sticking out. I was frostbitten and out of school for a couple of weeks. To this day, if I get into someplace cold my feet and the tips of my fingers let me know.

The whole family was infected with the flu. There were no deaths in the immediate family. Mother's sister moved in with us. She had two small children by that time and was unable to care for them. She had the most severe case.

So I wasn't really too aware, but I knew that my folks were against it. They were socialists and against that particular war. They never said they wouldn't fight to preserve rights and other conditions. But, on the other hand, they said this was not a war that they wanted, and they were happy that they didn't have anyone who had to be drafted. They weren't drafting family men yet. By the time they started taking men my

Yon: father's age, the war was over.

Ken: When you were going to high school, did you have socialist leanings, go to socialist meetings? Did you do any reading along those lines?

Yon: Not too much reading. I remember Mother Bloor coming and staying at our house. I didn't know who the devil she was. There was a Friends of the Soviet Union (Soviet Russia as they called it in those times) meeting in San Diego. She came to address that meeting. They were Friends of the Soviet Union from the start, and participated in activities to try to bring about normal relations between the peoples of both nations.

Ken: When you were going to school, did you have normal social life with the other kids? Did you go out on dates?

Yon: On some dates. In fact, I went out on dates when I was in grammar school. I went out with an Italian boy who spoke better Jewish *Yiddish* than I did. As I said, there were a lot of Italian families and the kids spoke Jewish. *Yiddish* A lot of them spoke Hebrew, which I never did learn.

Ken: Your first job was with who?

Yon: It was known as the Darby Hotel - a semi-private residential hotel. Most of the guests were Lords and Ladies, some from England - a countess.

Ken: In Los Angeles?

Yon: In Los Angeles. It was on West Adams. The hotel didn't look like too much on the outside. But inside there was such splendor and riches that I had never been exposed to. They had their private restaurant there with waiters and waitresses and a Maitre.

My desk was in an alcove where they used to have art exhibits. I had never been to an art exhibit before, and I was just floored by the framing, let alone the paintings that were put up all around me. They would come there and look at them and make comments.

Also, since there were no restaurants in the immediate neighborhood, I had lunch there at

Yon: the hotel. I had my own table and a special waiter who just catered to my needs. They had big bowls of fruit on every table, and everything else. There was so much waste. There were bowls of fruit, and every day they were fresh. Obviously it wasn't the same fruit that had been there the day before. There was so much waste, and one of the waitres made a remark to me once about how wasteful it was. Although there was no depression at that time we knew there were poor people.

Then, in early 1924 I believe it was, mother and dad said, "Why don't you go to the Young Workers League?" I wasn't too anxious, but they would go to a meeting in the neighborhood, so I would go with them. There is where I met my first husband. He father had been a Knight of Labor and an organizer of the Machinists Union and the IWW. He had a long history and was then a member of the AFL Machinists Union, and Ed was also a member of the Machinists Union. His father had also sent him to the Young Workers League. His father was also a contemporary of Mother Bloor. In fact he had worked with her in the South in different places, and had been tarred and feathered out of one town for trying to organize the Machinists. He was what is known as a boomer machinist, going from town to town trying to organize. So he sent Ed to the Young Workers League.

Neither one of us was too interested. And maybe that was our mutual interest at the time. We said we weren't too interested in that - we weren't going to go to meetings. We were just going to go with each other.

At the place where I was working - the manager - I did not take bookkeeping, and to this day I hate it, though I find myself having to keep books. I found out they had two sets of books there. And he asked me to take care of them temporarily as the one who took care of the books was ill. I noticed there would be a bill come in and this antique bureau in room so and so had to be repaired. What was on the books was altogether different than what was paid. Or an antique chandelier got broken somehow or other. There was sort of a double standard.

The men and women were there incognito. They never used their own names. They would say, "That's Lady Alice." Well, Lady Alice could be anybody. You don't know what the last name is, and she is in this suite. You would

Yon: have to call her and say there was mail for her. So Mr. (his name was Garlic and I have never forgotten that) asked me would I take care of the books. Well I, probably not intentionally, just have horsed them up, especially two sets of books that didn't jibe as far as I was concerned, and I wasn't too interested. He offered to send me back to school to take a course in bookkeeping, and he would pay for it. My salary would continue because all my other work was satisfactory, and I was able to maintain an even keel with the guests. The guests had no complaints about my appearance. I must say, in those days, that if I had a lilac dress that I had lilac shoes. And, if it was brown, it was brown shoes. I was quite a clothes horse at one time for a good many years. The gloves, the hat, and everything else, had to match. But I said I wasn't interested. I was going to get married, and to heck with the job.

Ken: How old were you when you got married?

Yon: I was seventeen, and I had my daughter before I was twenty-one.

Ken: What did you do when you were married - stay home?

Yon: Stayed home. I did not work for part of that period. Then Ed was a machinist. The depression was starting and, as I said, both of us had sort of that little background. The Trade Union Unity League, or Trade Union Educational League, came into being. I don't know which it was at that time. Some of the trade unionists, including Ed's father, were trying to get Ed interested in that. So a lot of them would come to the house and discuss with him, and I would listen to some of the discussion. We would have friends who would come over and discuss with us how come we weren't in the movement; that we shouldn't be away from it; that our backgrounds were such that we should know a little bit about it. And Ed, of course, knew more about it than I did. His father was a machinist, and maybe they would have to leave in the middle of the night because someone was coming to mob them. That would make a bigger impression than going to a dry goods store (of my father's) and then going to a wholesale house.

Mr. Fisher was the name of the sales person I would go with, and I would see a piece of chiffon that was hand painted. If I wanted it, why I got it.

Yon: It was a little different than, not knowing where you were going to sleep that night. Ed found himself in that position. As for the background, mine was sort of sheltered, yet exposed to some of the things that were happening in the movement, and to people. On the other hand, I had whatever I wanted. I was a spoiled brat. The fact that I didn't continue high school because I wasn't allowed to go nursing should show that I was rather stubborn. I was very determined to do what I wanted to do.

Ken: Did taking care of a house and a small child satisfy you?

Yon: It probably did. Believe it or not, we joined the Elks, and I was an Ekette and attended different affairs. Sometimes there would be a concert put on by the Workers Chorus, and I would go with my parents because I liked the singing and the songs. But I didn't do any reading. Then, in 1930 when the depression really started Eddie was still working and getting \$80.00 a week. If he worked overtime - more. This was quite a bit of money. So I was still the fashion chart. Everything was matched, blended in. It wasn't a black purse with a blue dress, not like now. I don't know why I'm going into all these details.

Some friends came over one day, and they were arguing about the depression, and that Eddie better join the left wing trade union movement because the AFL certainly wasn't doing anything and he knew that. If they ever found out he was talking like that, he would lose his job. He was a machinist foreman in the studios.

So we made a date. I believe it was February 28th, which is fast approaching now, and it was in 1930, so you see that was a good many years ago, to meet these people after a demonstration (not during the demonstration) on a Saturday, and we would go to a show - first have dinner out and then go to a show. This particular person now lives in Mill Valley and is very affluent. His wife was then working for the Traveler's Aid. So there was a steady income there. And he was a full time organizer.

We got to arguing. "You provoked the police." And he said, "They come, and they break up the meetings, and they don't let us speak." I said, "It's probably some of the things you are saying, and maybe someone is standing in the background and kicking them or something." And that it wasn't altogether the police who couldn't be as bad as he

Yon: said they were, including the Red Squad. This was under the jurisdiction of Captain Hynes, "Red Hynes". So I wasn't going to go to that demonstration, but we would meet him afterwards. We would take Joyce over to mother and leave her there for the night. We lived above Florence and Main at the time. That was in a bungalow court. We didn't have our own phone, Had to use the landlady's phone. We had our own little bungalow which was separate in this court.

We went down to the place to meet this couple. And lo and behold we found the plaza looking like a shambles - torn umbrellas, boxes that were broken and, you know, papers torn. It looked like there must have been some sort of a struggle there. We went looking, but couldn't find anyone. All around the plaza - we went across the street to the church, and couldn't see them. Then we saw his wife and she also looked like she was walking around. She had worked that day and was coming and looking. She said, "I understand there some arrests here, and I don't see anyone here." She said, "I have been walking around to see where the car might be parked, not that I have a key, but at least see where it is parked to see if it is here." And she said, "Do you mind walking with me to First Street?" (I have forgotten the name of the building now) and see if they know where Meyer is?"

So we walked up there, and we went to the third floor, I believe, and that was the International Labor Defense office, and it was dark. It was dark in February at five thirty and six. So she said, "Do you mind walking down to the first floor. There is another office there, and he might be there. We went down there, and that was the Communist Party headquarters; and there were about twenty five people there including her husband.

Along the window sill there were about ten Japanese sitting. All of them coming in were congratulating one man who was (I am four feet eleven in my stocking feet, and he was short). They were all saying, "A beautiful job, Hata." I didn't know what they were talking about. It seemed they saw this cop who was about six feet tall coming at a worker from the back with his club raised. He used ju sitso on him and floored that big cop so the person didn't get his brains splashed and got away. But the point was that there was no forethought. After a demonstration of that nature and, of course, this policeman being knocked off, the people in the patrol wagon were able to get out. Well, instead of dispersing, they dispersed to the party headquarters.

Ken: Nobody had been arrested?

Yon: There had been a few arrested in one patrol wagon. But then the others, including Meyer, in another wagon had gotten away. I kept saying, "Let's go, let's go, we are going to be late. We have our reservations at the restaurant."

At the height of the depression I was ^worried about the reservations. And I was dressed in a semi-evening gown - a cocktail gown of layers of georgette with rhinestone trimming, rhinestone belt. I don't know whether the slippers were silver or not, but they blended in with the rhinestones to say the least - in the middle of the depression at Party headquarters. I kept saying, "let's go, let's go." Meyer would say, "Just a minute. Just a minute. I want to see so and so." And they were people I didn't know. The only people I knew were Meyer and, of course, his wife.

And just as I was saying again, "Let's go. We are going to be late", the door was flung open and "You are not going anywhere". There was the red squad (I didn't know who they were) with sawed off shot guns. "Sit down where you are at." Well, Ed and Meyer's wife and I were up against a table. In fact we were sort of facing where the Japanese were sitting. When this commotion came, we turned around. In the corner there was an older white woman with a boyish bob, rather heavy set. She was standing, and they said, "Sit down where you are." There was a folding chair there. She said, "I am an American of (and I have forgotten the generation she said) and if I desire to stand, I will remain standing." And they took her and tossed her up against that chair so that it broke under her, and she just lay on the floor. So, those of us that were standing at the table - Eddie had to help me up because I am short and the table was a little bit high.

They started questioning us about our names and who were were and everything else. Now Black is a name that came into being that Saturday night. Eddie's nickname was Blackie on the job. Where the term "black Irish" comes from, I don't know, and I never did look into it, but he was what is known as Black Irish, and dark complected. If you had to call the shop, you had to ask for Blackie. If you asked for him by name, they wouldn't know who the heck you were talking about. So I thought (it must have flashed through my mind that some of the things Meyer was saying were true) they would attack you without rhyme or reason. Look what they did to that

Yon: to that woman. I didn't know her name. She was still laying there, you know, in great pain. You could see that. Eddie was first, and they said, "What is your name?" I said "Eddie and Elaine Black." The cop said, "I didn't ask you, I asked him." Eddie wasn't stupid, so he said "Ed Black" because it would have meant his job next Monday if he had given his name. The copy said, "What are you saying? Are you married to him?" And one of them pulled my hand. At that time I was wearing my then wedding ring and the diamond solitaire that had to go with it. Otherwise you wouldn't be considered married. And he called one of the others over and said, "Look, she says she is married," and "do you think this is real or is it Woolworth's?" He turned my hand, and it really hurt the way he was turning it. And he said, "What did you say your name was?" And I said, "Elaine Black". And that is how that name came into being. I used it for years, and still do as my middle name. Ed also, when he joined the TUEL, was known as Ed Black.

Ken: What happened after that?

Yon: They questioned and questioned. Then they said to this person, "Go into that other room." There were two rooms in this suite of offices. "Go in there." And Meyer was one of those who was told to go into the other room. And some of the Japanese were told to go in. Then they turned to the three of us. Eddie was in this dark suit. He was quite a dresser too - starched shirt, you know. Obviously we were going someplace, and I was obviously overdressed. Three of us were nicely dressed. They said, "You can go, but don't ever let us catch you with these red Russian bolsheviks again." I didn't know if there were any Russians there. It turned out there were a couple of Russian descent there. But to me it looked like there were more Japanese. So we left, and Meyer was taken to jail because he was one of those who had been in the van and had gotten away.

We found out where the car was parked. He did manage to give his wife the key, and we went and picked it up. We went to see the show, and we took her home for she didn't drive in those days. We took the car back to our place.

In the course of talking about all these demonstrations earlier, they said there was this demonstration Saturday, and you ought to come down instead of coming late and meeting us. I said, "No."

Yon: Then they said, "There is going to be a big national demonstration on March 6th." And I said "Well, if I can find a babysitter (which is what I told them before we had made this arrangement for the show - I believe this was on a Friday) I will come down and watch it." So, while he was still in jail, or was out on bail because there was an ILD then, I did not participate, but I did go down to the March 6th demonstration - and for what I saw I immediately went to the ILD, the International Labor Defense, and offered myself as a witness.

Ken: What did you see?

Yon: There was a parking lot about half a block away from the Los Angeles City Hall on Main Street and there was an orange juice stand. What attracted me to it was, all of a sudden there looked like a group of very tall people (and in them a couple I recognized as having invaded the party headquarters and found out they were from the red squad) converging toward that fruit juice stand - the whole group. There was a woman there with a glass of orange juice. She had very thick glasses on. I was across the street. She had a glass to her mouth, and they just swooped down on her and dragged her away so that the glass she had in her hand was shattered. And they started twisting her arms and started dragging her down Main Street toward the City Hall. She was saying, "Let me go, you are hurting me. Let me go." Her voice rose, and I thought, my God she wasn't doing anything. How could I accuse Meyer saying that somebody provoked. I had seen what they did to that elderly woman. I am older than she was now, but at that time she was an elderly woman. It crossed my mind that what Meyer said was probably true. She wasn't tossing leaflets up in the air (which wasn't against the law, but which they might consider against the law) and saying let's converge on and take over the City Hall. She had a glass of beverage to her mouth.

This woman turned out to be Millian Silverman who was a garment worker. Her husband was French and he was being deported as an undesirable Alien, a Communist, for being active in the movement here. He later became mayor of one of the French cities. After a while she joined him there. But she was charged with various charges - refusing to move, disturbing the peace, and I think even rioting as it was called during that time. I went to the ILD and offered my services as a witness. Well, I must say that they sort of looked out of the

Yon: corner of their eyes at me. Here is a young woman, obviously well dressed in the middle of the depression. She isn't coming there for relief or how to get on relief, or how to get somebody out of jail, but offering her services out of the blue as a witness, that this is what she saw.

Ken: But it was suspicious?

Yon: I shouldn't remember what I was wearing. But I had sort of a cossack hat of mock caracul, a short jacket of the same material, a blue dress that was bordered with the same material. Therefore I had brown shoes, a brown purse and brown gloves that blended in with the caracul. It wasn't exactly brown, but a sort of camel color. The height of fashion at the height of the depression.

They said the date of the trial hadn't been set yet, but what is your address and we will reach you. And I joined the ILD in April. This was March 6th, and I joined the ILD in April, 1930. I did become a witness. Then Red Hydes gets up there at the stand where I am a witness (and I had never been in court before) and swears that I am a known Communist and getting Moscow gold. And this is under oath. I just didn't know what he was talking about. He was, of course, a prosecution witness. He said "Among the witnesses will be one Elaine Black, who is a known Communist." Of course when I got to the stand I said I was not. I was not a member of the communist party at that time, and I didn't become one for another year. So his swearing under oath as the head of an intelligence bureau of a Police Department - There were other faults in his testimony too which I personally knew and could attest to.

The judge was very partial to the prosecution. When I testified, he said, "I have some questions of you. What is your feeling toward Soviet Russia?" Now if I had known anything about court procedure I would have told the judge he was out of order. It had nothing to do with the case, because I was a witness for Hillian Silverman. There were other defendants. I had not seen what happened to the other defendants. I didn't know the woman's name at the time it happened. But this is what I saw. And what had the Soviet Union got to do (or Soviet Russia as they called it at that time) with the charge of rioting on the streets of Los Angeles when they were pleading for bread, for food, for jobs, in whatever form it would be.

Yon: In fact, unemployment insurance was not a word yet, or a slogan that I was aware of at that time. I understand a program was in the hopper then for unemployment insurance and social security.

So the Judge said, "Supposing this country was at war with Russia. Whose side would you be on?" I said, "I would have to know who the attacker was first, and then I would decide."

Ken: You were just twenty at that time?

Yon: No. Joyce was already three years old at trial time. She was born in 1927, so I was a little older.

Then they started asking about Eddie. Then I got up on my high horse. The questions were what he does, and things like that. I sort of got apprehensive, and I didn't know why. Of course later I knew what my natural reaction was. I said, "If you want to ask him questions, subpoena him." He was not there on March 6th. Having listened to some of the other things, and the objections, I sort of knew. But it seems that the spectators in the courtroom were quite taken aback in my forthright answers, in not saying "My country right or wrong". That I had to see who attacked. On the other hand Gallagher who was the attorney (Leo Gallagher who was world famous) was one of the attorneys for the defendants. He would object but the judge overruled the objections.

Ken: OK. Now we are in the courtroom again.

Yon: I was still thinking they couldn't convict her. It was a jury trial, but it ended up with a conviction. It went on appeal. The ILD appealed.

After the conviction I attended more frequently the ILD meetings that were held. Before that I paid dues. I believe the dues were five or ten cents a month at that time. I wasn't really going so much to any of the meetings. There were quite a number of leaflets put out, and I don't recall any participation in distributing those leaflets. At any rate, after the conviction I got a little bit more active. Eddie did get laid off, so we moved out of the apartment. We moved in with my parents.

Ken: Why did he get laid off?

Yon: The movie industry also hit a slump, and I

Yon: guess they felt they didn't have to have that many people there. His department was closed down. They had already turned over to sound. Once they established the machinery for sound, they didn't really need that big a force of machinists. I don't believe any activity, or the fact that I testified, had anything to do with his layoff.

I went to work in a grocery store in the neighborhood, in Boyle Heights where my parents lived. And Eddie was looking for work. The Unemployed Councils came into being, and he joined the Unemployed Council. I was working and going to ILD meetings. The ILD discovered that I was a trained office worker - that that was my background, and all that jazz, typing and so forth. They needed someone in the office. They wanted to know if I would be interested. The pay was all of \$10.00 a week. I made a little bit more in the grocery store, but not too much more, and it was not work that I really liked. So I said, "Yes. I would come in for an interview." And I went down for an interview and said I would take it.

March 8th interview

Ken: We got as far as when your husband was laid off and you moved out of the apartment in Boyle Heights. Then what happened?

Yon: I worked in a grocery store, and I was called for an interview down at the ILD since I was a trained office worker. While the pay was just a little less than I was getting in the grocery store, it was work that I really liked. So I decided I would take the job in the ILD.

I went to work on February 10th, 1931, I believe, or February the 9th, and on the 10th there was a demonstration at the City Hall, an unemployed demonstration. There were several arrests. Among those arrested was a young Japanese-American, known by the name of Karl Hama, who ~~what~~ was very viciously beaten up. The ILD couldn't find out what police station he was taken to, so we spent time trying to find out where he was, in the meantime bailing out some of the others who had been arrested.

The Los Angeles Times the next day carried pictures of this young Japanese-American holding up a sign "Our Children Need Food" with a plain clothes man coming up from behind. And the next frame in the LA Times. front page, shows this

Yon: man laying on the ground. The third frame shows somebody trying to lift him up, and the fourth frame shows a person, bloody, holding up this Japanese. He is now my husband. We have been together forty three years coming this May 26. So he was actually the first case I handled so far as directly bailing and taking him to a doctor. The third day we got a call from a man who identified himself as Captain Hynes, who was the head of the red squad or intelligence bureau (or whatever name you want to call it. The papers called it the red squad) to come "pick up the Jap. He's dying anyway." I think it was the Lincoln jail where he was. And I posted bail and took him out, and immediately took him to a doctor because he still had a very bloody bandage on his head and his clothing was all bloody. He was charged with "disturbing the peace". Later on he did do ninety days on the charge although he hadn't uttered a word, just held up the sign silently.

Ken: How did you change from being an office worker into being a leader in the ILD?

Yon: The atmosphere in Los Angeles, at that time, was a mass violation of civil rights. The right to speak, the right to assemble, the right to petition, were all being violated by the red squad. Working in the ILD you were constantly under the threat of being invaded by the Red Squad. Several times they did come in and make a shambles of the place. You either fell by the wayside or grew with the situation. From just answering the telephone and relaying a message to Ida Rothstein, who was then the Southern California District Organizer of the ILD, or to Lillian Goodman, who came in afterwards as the District Organizer, I became the district secretary. This job was a little different. I would notify them there was an arrest down at the unemployed lot, or there was an arrest down by the plaza in Los Angeles where a lot of the free speech fights were going on. After I took the call, if there was nobody else around, I called the jail to see what the bail was. We did not use bond brokers then. All the time I was with the ILD we did not use bail bond brokers in either district, Northern or Southern California, unless an individual wanted to go out and buy their own bond. But we did not do it. Sometimes people bailed themselves out before they got hold of the ILD to defend them. So I learned to go to the main police station to post bail, or whatever - or Lincoln Heights

Yon: and take the person out. The bail money was raised by loans from \$5.00 up to any amount. If a person had \$100. or more in the bail fund, unless they gave it for a specific case, they had to give us at least thirty days notice that they wanted their loan back, because it was a revolving fund. So you always had to be aware of how much there was in the bail fund.

At that time, in Southern California, one of the charges used along with others was "suspicion of criminal syndicalism" which was a felony. On suspicion there was no bail, and they could keep you seventy two hours without setting or dropping the charge. We tried to analyze the other charges, rioting, refusing to move on, etc. If we didn't have money in the bail fund, we would start raising the minimum bail on disturbing the peace, maybe \$100. We would start trying to get the money together so that if the suspicion (a felony) was dropped you would be able to take out a person on a misdemeanor charge. Of course, those that were held on a felony, their bail was higher, and it took a little longer to raise the money. There was no instant getting out of jail. You had to stay in - sometimes overnight - sometimes a little longer.

Ken: What were some of the main projects you worked on?

Yon: In that year the Scottsboro case started. The Mooney case was reaching one of its plateaus. The Harlan, Kentucky, miners were in jail. We, the ILD, organized a conference. Twenty-six Local AFL unions in Los Angeles County sent delegates. We decided to have a big mass meeting at the Philharmonic, which was the largest meeting hall in Los Angeles at the time. We were going to have a speaker from the Tom Mooney Holders Defense Committee, someone from the Scottsboro case, and from the Harlan Kentucky case. One of the speakers was to be Sam Darcy, who was then the head of the Communist Party of Northern California, and a Catholic priest whose name escapes me now. The ILD was given the task of arranging for the hall and paying the rent, and things like that. The different unions loaned money towards that because there was going to be an admission so we could cover the rent of the hall. It was quite expensive in those days, in the heart of the depression - \$400. for rent alone. We made the deposit. In fact we paid the whole rent rather than a deposit because there might be some saying "You didn't really sew it down." Leaflets went out by the thousands saying we were going to have

Yon: the meeting, and we hit all the media.

When I got down to the hall the night of the meeting it was dark. I thought, gee, there were supposed to be lights already. I got down fairly early, and there were several hundred people milling across the street and all over. The Red Squad was there. I went into the lobby, and Hynes met me and said "There's not going to be any meeting." And I said, "Who said there's not going to be a meeting. This is an indoor meeting. It is not blocking traffic or anything else."

This was a public meeting with leaflets, and it had been in the press, and everything else. "Who says there's not going to be a meeting. You are violating our constitutional rights." So I said, "On whose edict was this?", and he said, "I say there is not going to be a meeting." He started shoving me out of the lobby, and it was dark. I thought it would be better for me to get out where there was light instead of staying in the lobby where he could smash me and whoever else came in. I think there were about three others who had walked in with me. So I left the lobby and they began throwing tear gas. If I remember correctly, there were over one hundred tear gas bombs thrown that night. It was the most massive tear gas attack that had taken place anywhere. As I started walking up towards Hill Street from the Philharmonic I began hearing screams from Pershing Square, but I wasn't going to go over there to see what it was. I was trying to get where there was more light rather than where it was dark. On the corner I saw the men I described who, in 1930, had walked into the party headquarters with their sawed off guns and said "you are not going anywhere." I had already seen some of these men when they testified againstillian Silverman in her trial as prosecution witnesses. So I had seen them in action but had not had any personal contact with them.

They were beating a little short man who is still alive today. He was a needle trades worker who I did not know at the time. I put myself between the clubs and him because they really had him down on his knees already, as short as he was, and I took some of the blows. The next thing I knew I was thrown into an open touring car. I found there were three men already in the back as prisoners, and one was this short fellow that I had tried to defend. I don't really know the complete picture of how many blows I got or didn't get. As we got in the car, Charles Evans, the one who always

Yon: wore brass knuckles on his hands and wore gloves whether it was cold or warm, was driving. This man said, "Aren't you ashamed hitting a lady." Evans let go the wheel of the car, which was headed up a hill, and said "She's no lady." He let me have it in my bust with his brass knuckles. I was pretty sore for a long time, but I realized that his reputation of having brass knuckles under those gloves was true. I had thought, perhaps, some of it was embroidered because I had had no direct contact or seen any of the bruises. But I felt them and realized his reputation of being a sadist. He was the shortest man on the squad; he wanted to show he was the toughest probably. And he probably was the toughest as far as beating and mashing heads and things like that.

So we were taken into the Hill Street Police Station. As we walked in, some women were being booked, and I heard one of them say, "Poland." (This was where she was born. And I was sort of - the expression now is "blow your mind" ^{would be} because that meant a Jewish woman was being deported to Poland for participating in a U.S. demonstration for Mooney, for the Harlan, Kentucky, miners, for the black Scottsboro boys (the Scottsboro Nine). The slogan was "Free the Scottsboro Boys" because the youngest was just thirteen and the oldest, I think, had just hit eighteen at the time. So they were boys. Now we would not use "boys" as a term for young adults. When they asked, "What is your name?" I refused to answer. I just didn't want to answer anything because I thought this would go down to the others so they could hear what some of the answers were. They called Hynes out. ~~Hynes wasn't there.~~ He was in another room. He said, "So, you won't answer questions. You won't say who you are." And he pulled me in ^{to} another room. They had Eddie, my then husband in that room, and they were beating him, ~~and~~ he was a bloody mess. They said, "You are going to be like that if you don't answer questions." And they took me back. Hynes said, "You are a flag waver." I said, "If you are going to call me a flag waver, then my name is Betsy Ross." So the case became known as the Besty Ross, et al case, alias Elaine Black.

The screams in Pershing Square were coming from ~~Eddy~~ Paul Walton, a young Black. They had him tree-ed and were making pulp out of his feet and legs so that today he still walks with canes. There were four of us who defended ourselves. Paul was one of them. This was my first trial in which I was a defendant. The judge we had was a fair minded judge. His father was a Superior Court Judge, but I have forgotten his name: It started

Yon: with an A, but I don't remember. Those particular papers are gone. I am going to have to go down to Los Angeles one of these days and look it up - that particular demonstration - and get all the facts and the names of the other defendants. *(There were eight of us)* Leo Gallagher was defending the others. Four of us were defending ourselves.

Ken: Was this a policy, that you were defending yourself?

Yon: It was more or less of a policy, if we felt we were capable of doing this. We always asked for a jury trial. The jury would usually go through just the lawyers hands. In this case it went through five people's questioning. It wasn't the judge, as it is now, asking the questions. At that time they had a little more elasticity in the questioning of the jury. The fact is that Gallagher, as an attorney, knew it is a violation of a section of the penal code to ask certain questions if overruled by the judge. So, we would pursue questions that were germane to the charges. And by our asking these questions we were able to trap a plant by the members of the prosecution; and there were plenty of plants. So, by the time the jury went through the questioning, they had a pretty good picture of what the defense was going to be. There were no surprises. In this particular instance there was a juror, number eight, that we had tried to get off the jury. But we had used up all our challenges, even though we had many defendants. She remained on the jury. They were hung for a long time, and she came back holding four fingers over her left ear. We were sitting looking in her direction. I turned around to Gallagher and said, "She is holding out for the four of us to be named guilty." It turned out that they did trade finally and found the four of us guilty. The judge immediately granted us our motion for a new trial.

Ken: Then what happened?

Yon: We won the appeal. The case was dismissed. There was no re-trial. But that was my baptism into a trial which took quite a while, in which I defended myself and in which I spoke to the jury saying that if they found us guilty they would be violating the basic rights of redress and petition; that what the meeting was all about was to petition for the freedom of Mooney, who had been in prison for many years; that the miners of Harlan, Kentucky, had the right to strike instead of being framed on murder charges; that

Yon: they would see that this is a frame up against workers' right to strike. And the Scottsboro Boys were victims of the times. They left their home state looking for work so that their families would have something to eat. Even the thirteen year old left; and that these two white women, who said that they had been raped by them, were professional prostitutes. Whose word were you going to take as to what actually happened in that freight car? The reason the women testified that way is they were scared of what would happen to them if they were found in the same box car with Blacks, or with Negroes, to use the language of the thirties. We didn't use the word Blacks at that time.

Ken: So, then you used the courtroom as a forum?

Yon: Yes. A forum to bring out the violations of civil rights that were going on, the right of free speech, and the right to assemble (which we certainly did here) in a private place, rent paid. We weren't allowed to go in. The police stopped us. The tear gas was so thick there that night that the Biltmore Hotel had to be emptied, and the area had to empty out. They didn't know what it was all about. Hundreds were exposed. They wouldn't have even known there was such a meeting going on if the police hadn't violated our right to assemble. We had a right to assemble in Pershing Square, if we wanted to, under the Constitution. But this was an even further violation because we were in a private auditorium that was for rent.

Ken: In this case, when they took you to jail, how long were you in jail before you got bailed out? Or was everybody in jail?

Yon: Well, the first charge was suspicion of criminal syndicalism, refusing to move, disturbing the peace. We were kept the seventy two hours on suspicion. Then the charges became rioting, refusing to move on, disturbing the peace. Bail was posted on the third day.

The first night the women were put into solitary confinement. We were all tossed into one cell. There were six women. There were steel walls on all four sides. We all had to put our shoes on the outside. But we discovered that in the next cell there was a woman (we didn't know too much about the drug scene then) who was on withdrawal. And she was allowed to keep her shoes and she banged all night long. This was a sort of

Yon: harrassment of those of us who were arrested on political charges. Every other cell had shoes outside except this one cell along side of us. She banged and screamed all this night long. It was just terrible. Noises that we hadn't heard before - any of us. I haven't heard anything like it since, although I have been arrested many times since then. So we were bailed out in seventy two hours. A writ was filed because we were being held only on suspicion and therefore they couldn't post bail because they didn't know how many violations of the code we were being accused of. I think the bail on each one of us - some had \$500. and some had \$1,000, depending on the number of charges against those that were arrested.

Ken: When you got out of solitary, did they put you in with the other women?

Yon: Well, there were so many of us that we were in adjacent cells that had two beds, one on top of the other.

Ken: Did they feed you?

Yon: Yes, they fed us. The thing was they said we didn't answer questions. The fact that I said just Betsy Ross and gave the ILD as my address, and that I would not answer where I was born (although everybody there knew I was born in the United States) - it was just really a cue to the others who were arrested that they didn't have to answer at that particular time as to citizenship or anything else. Some of them went to extremes, and they wouldn't even give an address. You see, they went from one extreme to the other. The next day it was decided that they would answer certain questions and give an address, even if it was their union address of the ILD address. They had a right. They could be reached there. Then they put us in the regular cells. The case is known as the Betsy Ross case, and I think in some of the documents you will see that I used the alias Betsy Ross. That is how it came about. I told Hynes that if he called me a flag waver, then I must be Betsy Ross.

Ken: Were there any other key cases, or any other activities you were involved in while you were in Los Angeles?

Yon: Yes. In Los Angeles there was a mass raid on the Communist Party in Long Beach. There were over one hundred arrested, and a number of deportations as a result. A Greek person, if he went back to Greece, faced execution for being a Communist. And a number of Japanese aliens were arrested. We had

Yon: to fight to try to save their lives because, if they were found guilty of being undesirable aliens and sent back to their respective countries, it meant long terms of imprisonment or even death?

Ken: Was Karl one of these?

Yon: No. Karl was American born. He was not one of those. He is what is known as "Nisei". The others were "Isei."

That was a long struggle. They were out one \$1,000. bail. There were some Russian citizens among them. They had to be bailed out. There was no treaty with Russia as far as exchange of prisoners. Some of these men and women in that Long Beach trial stayed on deportation charges for thirty years because there was no exchange with the Soviet Union. On the other hand, when the others were convicted of being undesirable aliens we appealed it, and when we lost that appeal we next appealed for what was known as "voluntary departure" to a country of their own choice, and the Soviet Union accepted them. Going voluntarily meant that you had to pay your own fare. If you are deported by the government, they put you on whatever means of transportation that will take you back. So we were involved in raising thousands of dollars, first for defense, and then for voluntary departure to the Soviet Union. There were twelve that left at one time towards the end of 1932.

Ken: Were these what you would call landmark cases? Did you set a precedent in any of these cases?

Yon: No precedent was set because voluntary departure was something they already had in the code, so that it was using the code to the fullest extent. If you would volunteer to depart - even to the country of your birth in some cases if you wanted to -- this case wouldn't appear on your record. So, you see, those were some of the machinations in the law, this immigration law, which was then under the Department of Labor, not the Department of Justice.

Ken: You moved to San Francisco, didn't you?

Yon: In April of 1933.

Ken: Why?

Yon: Well, first of all I had separated from Eddie. Ed was quite a lush as they call it now -

Yon: a drinker. And he liked to gamble. While he did join the movement, there was probably some jealousy. I had been selected to go to the Party District School for a month while he thought he, as a trade unionist, should be the one to go, and various factors, so that it reached a climax in July of 1932 when the final separation came. We had separated several times off and on for the same reason - his drunkenness. Speakeasies and things like that. I think he knew every one in the county. The final separation was on our daughter's fifth birthday, so that it is very vivid in my mind. We were having an ILD District Executive Board Meeting. Because there had been several raids at the headquarters, we were meeting in different homes. It happened to be at our home that we were meeting. And Ed came in during the meeting. It was working hours. After all, I was working, and the meeting just happened to be in our house. He demanded to know where his shirt was. I said, "You know where it's at." And he came back and said, "I don't like the way it's ironed." I said, "Will you please iron it? You taught me how to iron shirts. I never knew how to iron shirts until I married you. So why don't you go ahead and iron it? I am working now." He just kept on disrupting the meeting. So I took all his clothes and just threw them on the front lawn, and that was it. I said, "This is it", and that ended it, although he did come back and make overtures.

Ken: We skipped something here. You said you went to the Communist Party School. You hadn't been a communist. When did you join, and why did they send you to school?

Yon: In October, having been at the conference and seeing the work of the party at that time, and having been called a communist all the time at trials and in the newspapers, I decided I would finally become a member of the Communist Party. I joined after the conference in October, just prior to the meeting. When I went to the Philharmonic I had been a party member for one week. To say it was all Communist was not so. You didn't have to be a communist to be a member of the ILD, to work for it, to become a paid official, and to continue working for it. I did not join the communist party because I was in fear of losing my job. It was because of the activity I saw of the communist party in the unemployed movement, in the fight against deportation, and I saw that they were the ones who were most harrassed as far as civil rights. I thought there

Yon: must be something there that the employer class which had everything wanted to see decimated. So I decided I would be a Communist. Eddy had joined a month prior to that.

Ken: I find a contradiction - with all these people being beaten up and so on that Eddy, who was a drinker and a gambler, would join the Communist Party. Is that a contradiction?

Yon: Well, his father had been a charter member. As I found out afterwards, my parents also were. I didn't even know. I didn't know that part of it. Eddy knew. His father, before that, had been in the Knights of Labor and the AF of L. He grew up with it. His father also was a drinker. His father was known as a weekend drinker. He would get his pay Friday and then the weekend was a lost weekend. But he lived to be ninety some - always a rebel to the end. My daughter had relayed that nobody could say anything wrong about me. It would lead to a fight, drunk or sober. ~~So~~ I did not see them again once Eddy and I separated. I lost contact with that part of the family.

Ken: So you kicked Eddy out. How did you get to San Francisco?

Yon: There was an opening in the I.L.D. here, and I really felt that I needed a change of scene. When Ed and I did discuss our final fight, he said that if he didn't take Joyce when school opened, which was in September, that meant he wanted me to keep her for the school period and he would take her for the holidays. He didn't come in September and then when he did make the overtures at Christmas, he didn't try to see Joyce although the arrangement was that if he didn't take her for school, he would take her for the holidays. So that was the break of the so-called gentlemen's agreement between us. (It wasn't down in writing). He was then working in Los Vegas as a foreman on the Boulder Dam. He worked there for a good many years. I thought that perhaps if I came up to San Francisco, and he heard about it, maybe he would come and take Joyce either for the holidays or for the school period. I thought that I needed a change of scene. I also felt that with all the attacks on headquarters (my home had been invaded and wrecked at one period) - perhaps there was a change of personnel - so that before they got their roots in again it would help take off the heat.

Yon: The struggle in San Francisco was beginning to tighten up too with growing unemployment. San Francisco was known as a union town, but there was beginning to be more and more violations of civil rights there. And there was an opening in the ILD office. One of the men who was working in the ILD was leaving to work in the printing trades. He was a linotype operator. He was going to work for a paper and therefore would not be available full time. There were two men in the ILD office here. So, with me there, that would put a woman as well as a man in charge of the office up here.

Also I was beginning to be involved with Karl, and I wasn't quite sure whether or not I was prepared to fight on another front - mixed marriage - and whether or not it was the right thing to do. Perhaps if I came up here and saw what the situation was and made my home here, maybe I would find other interests, or continue with the same interest.

Ken: Was Joyce with your mother then?

Yon: I left her with my mother because first of all I didn't know where I would live here or what the conditions were; and it was also the middle of school, and Easter was coming. Maybe Eddy would come and pick her up for Easter. He wouldn't have to meet me, and he would have Joyce there. She stayed with my folks for three years, although I would take her for vacations.

There was a big campaign on Mooney - the re-opening of one of the big indictments against him which he had been fighting so he could prove he was being framed. This was being heard in San Francisco. I came in the middle of that particular struggle.

On May 26 Karl came up. He was ^{to be} the editor of the Rodo Shimbun, which was the Communist Party Japanese language press. The editor of the Rodo Shimbun had been deported. We had gotten voluntary departure for him. So Karl came up here to be the editor, and we decided, yes we would fight against the mixed marriage thing. But we didn't have the wherewithal to go to a state where it was legal. So we lived together for two and a half years.

Ken: Did you have a divorce then?

Yon: Eddy had gotten a divorce. I let him get the divorce, and that was it. So he had been

Yon: in Nevada more than six weeks, and I wasn't about to spend money to go to Nevada when he was there. It didn't mean that much more, as to who obtained the divorce, you see. There was even no mention made of a child when he obtained the divorce.

Ken: I want to ask a question now. This was in the thirties. And you were doing a job, and other women were doing jobs that few women did at the time. And you were a member of the Communist Party. What was the approach toward women on the part of the Communist Party, and on the part of the men you worked with?

Yon: Well, the party's principles were against the domination of male chauvinism, and for equality. You found women in various posts, not only in the district offices, but in the national office and on the newspapers. But there was male chauvinism in the ranks, and even in some of the leaders, because it was too new a concept for some of them to really put the meat on the bone. It was there, but they just didn't practice it at times. As an example, a little later on, when something came up, and I went to protest that certain things were happening. I thought we had to tighten up our screening of people (I will come to that particular case later on). I was told that I had been around the cops too much, and the maybe I ought to retire and have a baby. I said, "Well, I already have one child, and I am not about to have another at this particular time." So that was sort of a semblance of male chauvinism to suggest you are losing your touch here, so maybe you ought to go back to your own role. That was a struggle to fight because, let's face it, so many things are ingrained in us at our mother's breast that it is awfully hard to do away with. Even some of our own mothers taught us that our position was in the kitchen, not out on the picket line or out on the street corner. It is ingrained, and the struggle is there still.

Ken: Did you accept these statements?

Yon: Where it was obvious, and where they were saying things because I was a woman, I would point out - "Now look, first of all I am a comrade, second" - and on down the line. "This is rank male chauvinism, and you know you are committing a crime against your own constitution and your own principles. You are committing an act of male chauvinism." But we had women. My own contact was with the Party in Northern and Southern California, and in both of those districts women had very leading roles. Whether it was in the

Yon: trade union section where women were very active, in the needle trades, or in the textiles - you found women all over. The office workers weren't electing women leaders.

Ken: Well, those were women's unions, weren't they?

Yon: Predominantly women, and they fought against the domination of men in those industries. I am an office worker. To this day you find the Office Workers Union leaders predominantly men. Yet most of their members are women. They have a token one or two women on their executive board now, and that was a fight. I am talking about the International Executive Board. As far as I know, at street meetings and things like that, it wasn't just men who were speaking. The women spoke too. As to candidacy on the Party ticket, there were women. And even in the non-partisan campaigns there were men and women that were running for different offices - whether it was Governor, or State Treasurer, or what have you.

Ken: What were some of the landmark cases you participated in while you were in Northern California - was it in 1933?

Yon: There was a cotton strike down South in Tulare.

Ken: What was the name of the union?

Yon: The Agricultural Workers Industrial Union. It was a Trade Union Unity League Union, I think, and then afterwards it became a CIO union, a few years later. At that time it was the Trade Union Educational League or the Trade Union Unity League. The organization had changed its name. I really should know this. Karl would know. These were left unions that came into being because the AFL was not doing anything in agriculture. They wouldn't touch it with a ten foot pole in the early thirties. Afterwards they organized some shed workers in different areas - in Imperial Valley and so forth. But, at that time it was the TUEL which then became the TUUL.

Ken: What happened - why did they strike?

Yon: They were asking for \$1.00 a day wages for the cotton pickers, which was very hard work. Now it is mechanized, but at that time the men, women, and children worked.

Ken: Why did they put them in jail?

Yon: They were on picket lines. There were vigilantes. There were even killings. The vigilantes shot into the union hall and I believe there were three workers that were killed outright. The strike went from Tulare county down to Bakersfield.

Both the Southern and Northern California Districts of the International Labor Defense were ^{involved} ~~just~~ ^{the party had} one district then, District 13, I believe. The ILD had two districts because of the vast number of cases. There had to be a division, so there was Northern and Southern California, and the boundary was Tulare. It was supposed to be Fresno, but there was an overflow.

There were strikes going on in agriculture up and down the State.

There was a strike in Lodi, for instance, where the vigilantes had corded off all the roads and put up road blocks. If you came from Stockton into Lodi, you couldn't get through a blockade unless you were screened by the vigilantes who were there, armed. There had been some arrests. The bail was \$1,000 on one of the men there. It was decided that I was to go up there and post the bail. When I got to the courthouse in Stockton, I was told I would have to go to the Justice of the Peace to post it with him. This was a different routine than anyplace else. Usually you post it in the City Hall, and you get a receipt there. To go out to a private home was something different. I didn't drive then, and didn't have a car. The ILD borrowed a car. Altogether I think there were four men, and I was the fifth person in the car.

When we got to the blockade headed to the Justice of the Peace's home, we were stopped by these vigilantes. They had been deputized. They wore stars, but they had their pickhandles and their sawed off shotguns. "Where are you going?" "We are going to the Justice of the Peace." "What are you going there for?" I grabbed the hand of the man sitting next to me and said, "We are going to get married, and these are our witnesses." So they let us through. Now if I had said we were going to bail a man out, they probably would right then and there searched us. So we went on to the Justice of the Peace's home after they opened up the barricades. When we got in and told the Justice of the Peace that I had come to post bail for (I have forgotten the name of the defendant) I thought he was going

Yon: to have apoplexy. He just turned blue in the face. I said, "Look, I've got legal tender here. Even if this was \$1,000 in pennies you would have to take it. I have witnesses here. This is the bail on the man. I want a release so I can go down to the San Joaquin County Jail and get him out." He had to give me a receipt that showed I had posted the bail with him. It was in government bonds, but ~~it was~~ *They were* negotiable. You couldn't use the non-negotiable. When we went back the vigilantes wished us well and opened up the barricades. We got to the jail and bailed that particular agricultural leader out until he could stand trial. So one of the outstanding things was that you sort of had to use your wits and be alert. Not just I, but anybody else who was doing it. We had to be alert and meet it head on. If I had said we were going to bail out so and so they might have even killed us for that \$1,000 - because they knew it had to be negotiable - or who knows what. They could have said they found the car overturned. They could do it here in California like they did in the South all those years, with their lynching and dumping bodies that you didn't find for years. So that was one of the incidents.

Then, of course, in 1933 there was still the unemployed situation going on. The Workers Ex-servicemen's League had a lot on Howard Street where they had street meetings going on. They were busted and arrested. People who were just giving out leaflets were arrested for distributing leaflets, disturbing the peace and what have you. There was a constant turnover of people being arrested in different areas and up in the agricultural fields. It meant trips there. It meant either going by bus, or going by train sometimes. It meant hitching rides even because funds were low.

I think dues in the ILD at that time were 10 cents a month. An assessment for the Scottsboro Boys was five cents and for Mooney was probably twenty five cents once a year because things were so bad.

In the bail fund at one time ~~there~~ *was* almost \$200,000 bail. ~~We~~ *we* discovered, too, that if the bail went up in the name of an organization or a defendant the judge could very easily use it ~~for~~ *to* pay a fine. But if it was put up in the name of an individual, before the jury came back with a verdict (and it was usually a jury trial) ~~that if you~~

Yon: remanded the defendant into the custody of the court and none of it could be used for a fine. So you had to learn that particular part of the law whether you were a lawyer or not. At one time there was almost \$200,000 bail up in my name. Of course the papers would say I had gotten a shipment of Moscow gold. Actually it was not Moscow gold, but \$5. and \$10. and \$20. loans.

There were some people with property who were interested in maintaining civil rights and who were well to do middle class or upper middle class. They were willing to put their property up. Now property bail was a little more complicated than cash. If the bail was \$1,000 you had to have at least two property owners, each with at least \$2,000 equity in property, and you had to post it for the appearance of the defendant. It meant that the two property owners would have to come to that particular court and make a personal appearance. Whereas, if it was cash bail, somebody else could take it in my name. I didn't have to be the one who went. They could say that Elaine Black is posting \$1,000 bail for Karl Hama who is charged with disturbing the peace.

I kept on using the name Elaine Black all through the years as far as the ILD was concerned. A lot of people did not know, although we made no secret about it and went places together, that Karl and I were actually living together. We did. We had difficulty in finding places that would rent to us because we were mixed. But we finally did find a place after living with friends for a number of months. We found an attic in a place that is no longer in existence. The toilet was on one floor and the bathroom on still another. The attic was up on the fourth floor, a narrow stairway, on O'Farrell and Laguna. That building was torn down. There is now a very rich apartment *building* on that particular corner.

Ken: Did you still maintain your style of dress that you had when you were younger?

Yon: I always tried to coordinate. For a couple of years my basic coat was a green coat. I would try to have dresses and things that would go with the green, so that it would blend in.

Ken: Although you didn't have much money then, you still maintained your appearance?

Yon: I maintained my appearance. In those days you didn't appear in court, or even speaking, without your gloves and hat. You will see a lot of pictures of me in those days in the courtroom with a hat on, and if my purse is showing, with gloves alongside.

Ken: Let us go into a couple of more cases. I know you were in a lumber strike up North.

Yon: Well, that was in the thirties.

Ken: What about Santa Rosa?

Yon: The Santa Rosa tar and feathering. The men who were tarred and feathered were not strikers. They were men who were supporting the strikers up there. I believe it was the apple strike. Six men, I believe, were taken out and tarred and feathered. One was the Communist Party organizer, one was the union organizer, and others were members of unions that were supporting the apple pickers on strike.

Ken: What did you have to do with that?

Yon: First of all to protest. I believe a couple of them were arrested. The case aroused a tremendous amount of interest. I tried to have the apple strikers who were arrested on the picket line bailed out, and to have attorneys there. I believe even some of those who were tarred and feathered were later charged with various crimes like disturbing the peace.

There were other strikes all around the area. Some of them were small cases. Then in 1934 came the massive maritime strike in which there were hundreds of arrests in San Francisco - let alone other ports. The strike started on May 9, 1934, and on May 30th (Decoration Day, as it was known then) the youth (the Young Communist League and other youths) had an anti-war demonstration which resulted in massive arrests and bloodied heads down on the waterfront where they held their rally, although they had had their rally there a number of times. But at that particular time the strike was on. There were a number that were seriously injured during that May 30th demonstration.

During the course of the strike there were a lot of seamen, and the Marine Workers Industrial Union, who came out on strike in support of the longshoremen, and for their own demands. So I worked with the International Longshoremen's

Yon: Association (ILA) at that time - the Defense Committee. We [the ILD] would hold mass rallies on the picket line and have someone speak and tell the strikers that if they were arrested this is what they were supposed to do. We issued a little flyer that sold for 1 cent apiece that said what to do when under arrest. It outlined a number of things for people to do in order to preserve their rights, and it gave the ILD address and phone number. Also we told the ILA Defense Committee they should not be surprised if there were attempts at frameups of their leaders just like there had been in all the different strikes that had occurred. There was Mooney and Billings still doing time on a frameup because of their activities around the labor movement in San Francisco.

Also, during that time, we were organizing monthly visits to the labor prisoners in California *prisons*. California had the most labor prisoners behind San Quentin and Folsom walls. We had men like Matt Schmidt and McNamara who had been in the 1910 Times bombing. Those who want to look into that can read Lincoln Steffens book on it. To his dying day, whenever I would meet him, Steffens would speak of the injustice to the McNamara brothers and the others who were arrested in that Times case *that* he had helped put them in jail and he could not rest until he saw them out. So there were organized committees to go see them. There was a period when McNamara was in Folsom, and I was one of those who was finally given permission to visit him, outside of the attorneys. That was his only key to the outside. Then he was moved back to San Quentin where Mooney and the Imperial Valley criminal syndicalism prisoners were held. The same went for Billings in Folsom. You couldn't see him without special permission. I was able afterwards to delegate that particular permission to somebody else from the ILD so that he (~~McNamara~~) *Billings* had contact with other people.

The ILD provided what was known as prison relief. It was only \$5. a month, but that was something in those days. We had, I think, over thirty prisoners. The Imperial Valley prisoners were still in jail on charges of criminal syndicalism. They had been convicted, so they were in San Quentin. Two of them were in Folsom. One of them was a Japanese who was deported in 1932, but the others were still doing time. I am trying to think of some of the other labor prisoners who were there.

Yon: Then in 1934 and 1935 the Sacramento criminal syndicalism victims joined, and then the King-Ramsey-Conner and the Modesto Boys. We were organizing monthly visits so that there would be someone going to visit prisoners every week. Once a month that same group would go to visit. Then, when anyone came from abroad or from back East, like Mother Bloor or Anna Damon, who wanted to visit labor prisoners, we would organize a group to go. If I had just seen Tom Mooney and it wasn't time for me to see him again (because I could just see him once a month) then I would see one of the other labor prisoners.

At that time I was going once a week to see different ones of the prisoners. Some of the men who had been incarcerated for years were just fantastic, and I have never met men of that calibre since. Like Jim McNamara who had been in since 1911 (the case ~~has~~ started in 1910). His acute awareness was not only of what was happening in the world, but also within the prison walls. He was known as Uncle Jim. He just befriended everyone regardless of what they had been. He saw some good in the people that he could pull out. He himself just fought. He was put in the dungeon many times fighting for human rights within the prison walls.

Ken: I am going to ask another question here. You were known as the Red Angel and the Tiger ~~Woman~~. Girl Where did you get these names?

Yon: The Red Angel came about, more or less I think, in 1934 when there were so many arrests. I was spending more time, I think, down at the Hall of Justice with large sums of money on me, although I didn't announce that. Many a time we had to walk from the ILD headquarters which were at Sixth and Market (another period it was at 121 Haight) clear down to the Hall of Justice on Kearney Street and Washington because there wasn't money in the general fund. Yet we had \$1,000 or \$2,000 in our purse. But it was holy. That was the bail fund. No interest was paid. On the other hand you couldn't take a dime out for fare because that wouldn't leave that \$100 or \$5 you had borrowed for bail, because it would then be \$4.90. So you did not allow carfare out of that bail fund. That was separate and above everything else.

I was arrested in the Hall of Justice during the Maritime strike. I had \$2,000 on me; was on the way to bail out two seamen who had been arrested.

Yon: I stopped at the second floor of the Hall of Justice to see if some trials were going on. Then the Red Squad (we had a Red Squad in San Francisco) picked me up and said, "Where are you going?" I said, "I am going upstairs to post bail." "No, you are not, you are going with us." They took me upstairs, and I was booked on \$1,000 vag [rancy]. Now how can you be a vagrant with no means of support and have \$1,000 of bail put against you? That means \$1,000 cash bond. If it were property it would be two people with \$2,000 equity each. How could you be a vagrant (the normal bail for a vagrant was \$5.00, \$20.00, \$25.00), and here it was \$1,000. While I had the \$2,000 to bail the two men out, I was put in. But I did not put bail up for myself. I had to call out, and somebody came in and bailed me. Then I bailed the two men out. That particular charge of vagrancy against me was dropped. I had about three other times I was picked up on \$1,000 vag [rancy] during the strike.

Ken: You were harrassed?

Yon: Of course I was harrassed. It wasn't just me who went on \$1,000 vag, and go out again, and so on. It was almost like suspicion of criminal syndicalism where they could hold you for 72 hours without a specific charge, because that's what it meant. It meant holding you with a high bail. They didn't even put that kind of bail on a pimp who might have been arrested for vagrancy, and a known pimp at that. I think at the time I was being booked one of the officers said, "Oh, so finally they got the Red Angel." Some of the other prisoners heard it, and they came out and said, "You know they are calling you the Red Angel." And that's how that was sort of picked out. It was a fluke because if I had gone in and bailed out those two seamen as I had done so many other times, and bailed others out on various charges, there would have been no Red Angel. I had just been doing what I had been doing. So sometimes they toss names at you which have an awful lot of meaning to the people on the outside, when really it wasn't their intention.

During that period, when somebody's bail was real high and you were fighting for Own Recognizance (in those days O.R. also meant no bail) you would go to the judge's house. On one occasion, at 2 o'clock in the morning, I went to Judge Lazarus' house to get bail reduced on a group of men that had to be bailed out. He had

Yon: occasion to throw that name up at me, that he had done this, and this, and this when I called him a racist when the occasion arose. Those were things that came every day. We had a lot of meetings at that time in different parks talking on different cases. A lot of us got arrested. It wasn't just me. But I did get arrested about eight different times in 1934, and had several trials as a result.

July 17, during the general strike, a reign of terror started. First July 5th. I must go back to that.

Ken: Bloody Thursday?

Yon: Yes. Bloody Thursday. As I say, there had been this bloody May 30th, and a lot of young people had been injured --

[March 8, 1976 - tapes three and four]

Ken: Since we are starting a new tape, there is one question. How did you develop so quickly the ability to defend yourself and to speak publicly? Where did you get your training?

Yon: Perhaps some of it came about while I worked. When I couldn't get work as an office worker, during periods before the grocery stint, I worked as a salesgirl, meeting the public in that way. Also as a kid occasionally I helped out my dad in the store in San Diego where people of various races came in. My parents always taught me that all people are equal, and in all races you have rats. Those are the ones you don't want to have anything to do with regardless of his or her color. A rat is a rat, and it made no difference whether they were Jewish (they could be a rat too) and we treated them as such. So that probably did stick with me, the fact that you have a feeling for people. Those you like, you do whatever you can for them. Those that you don't, you act accordingly. You never start a fight, but you don't run away from one either. You don't expose yourself to it, but if you get into it you don't just disappear from it and let someone else take the blows.

Yon:

I had been taught through my grammar school and high school days about the Constitution and the Bill of Rights. We had to know it by heart in those days. I don't know whether they still do now, but in those days we had to know where every comma was, where every "t" was crossed, where every "i" was dotted, so that you knew it by heart, and it meant something. At least it did to me. And I was just appalled at the rank violation of those rights and their [the violators, presumably police, etc] being able to get away with it. And people whose rights were violated were doing time in jail, even if it was just ninety days. I just couldn't believe it. So I began reading more and more on case histories and frame ups and that is what I sort of concentrated on. Not so much on theory, on Leninism or Marxism, although I did study that too. I did not go into theory to be able to quote pages from any of those doctrines. But I certainly, at that time, could quote chapter and verse of the Constitution and the Bill of Rights. Often, when I went to demonstrations, I had copies of them in my purse.

Ken:

You became a public speaker just from necessity?

Yon:

Most of my public speaking at first was not so much at meetings, but in the courtroom. When I defended myself for the first time, that was sort of my approach to speaking - part of it to hostile crowds, not friendly ones. Perhaps I had a natural way with words. I don't know. I talked too much perhaps. I still can talk. I have a loud voice that projects itself, so that when, on May 9th, they had their first demonstration at the Civic Center --

Ken:

Who had?

Yon:

The Longshoremen, announcing their strike. I was a speaker there from the ILD offering them support to fight for their rights; and also to help with strike relief if needed. The loudspeaker system was sabotaged. The Civic Center was different than it is now. There weren't any obstructions there. It was just all flat - no fountain in the middle, and whatever. It was all packed with people, and I was told afterwards that mine was the only voice that projected to the whole crowd, not just to those in front of me. There was no loud speaker. To this day I hate a loud speaker because I have got this loud voice that would shatter everybody's ears if

Yon: I did talk through a loud speaker. Usually my speaking was based on the fight for civil rights, for constitutional rights, for the right to organize, and to preserve the Constitution, and to enhance it where it needed enhancing.

Ken: What about July 5th, Blood Thursday?

Yon: July the 5th I was at a meeting of the Defense Committee of the ILA, as it was known at that time. The headquarters were at Mission and Steuart Streets. The meeting was called because there had been a battle on July 3rd when they [the waterfront employers] had tried to run in scabs and cargo and tried to provoke, and there had been some arrests. We were meeting to plan what to do about further attacks and what we were going to do about those that were in jail, and how much ILD support they wanted. In some cases they wanted outright support. Seamen, for instance, needed support because they didn't have the funds and didn't have a home base as the ILA had. They would notify the ILD of a seamen, who had just gotten off the boat, ~~was arrested~~, and found himself in the clutches of the law. It might not be strike related, but they were just trying to keep them off the picket line. So we had been discussing that.

I was headed down the stairs after the meeting and started to smell tear gas. I heard a shot, but thought maybe it was a tear gas gun, and I kept on walking. One of the men said, "Elaine, what are you doing here? They are shooting. Those are live bullets. You are going to get it." And he tossed me in the back of a car. He had an open coupe at that time, you know, where you put on your isenglass windows. He tossed me in there and said, "You can't stay around here." He drove me away towards Rincon Hill where we saw a big crowd. And he said, "Those are live bullets that they are shooting. That's no place for you." He drove me back to the ILD office which was at 121 Haight Street at that time.

That afternoon I got a call at the office, ~~AND~~ ^{AND WAS TOLD} ~~They said~~ they would like to see me come down to the morgue, meet them down at the morgue, because there was an unidentified corpse there. I said I couldn't go because I had an appointment with someone at 5 o'clock. I just had no car and I had no way of getting down to the Hall of Justice (the morgue was in back of it). I said that if there was still no identification, I would come down

Yon: after 5 o'clock. There was nobody in the office. I was the only one. I gathered that there were things happening on the front, arrests, and I wanted to be there to be able to mobilize people to go down and bail them out.

I turned down that first invitation to come to the morgue. Then I got a call from Henry Schmidt who was on the strike committee. He said it was necessary for me to go down to the Hall of Justice; that there was a corpse there and that it had on an ILD dress button; that this particular person had died between Steuart and Spear streets (where the Rincon post office now stands); that another corpse had been identified down at Steuart and Mission, and there were a number of wounded; and that it was necessary for me to come down there. So Henry said he and Dutch Deitrich, who was the chairman of the ILA Defense Committee, would meet me at the Hall of Justice and go with me. So I went down there. When they took the sheet off it was the man who turned out to be the person I had the appointment with. I said, "No, it can't be - it can't be. I was supposed to meet him at 5 o'clock." That was Nick Bordoise. He had on a belt with initials. He had no other papers on him. I knew him as Condon, short of Condorokas. I did not know his name - Bordoise. He was a cook - a Greek, in the ILD, very active - a member of the Communist Party. He would go down and help in the strike kitchen - preparing food. And if he heard of any arrests he would let me know. He sold the Labor Defender - gave the strikers the Labor Defender. He was a very devoted member of the ILD. And he was going to report back to me that day. The meeting had been pre-arranged. He was going to be at the front on the 5th, so he would let me know what happened. We didn't know there would be an attempt to break the strike on the 3rd which would necessitate my being down there at the hall. There was no way of reaching him, so I was going to keep our original appointment. I just broke down and kept saying, "It can't be him. It can't be him." I don't know what the B on his buckle stood for. I knew him as so and so. I knew he was a member of the Greek Branch of the ILD. I knew he was a member of the Cook's Union

He was also a member of the ILD. That's what I said. I did not go into the fact that he may have belonged to other things. I didn't know his real name. It was true that foreign born people used alias to protect their families back home.

Karl, for instance, wrote poetry under one name and edited the paper under the name of Hama. He was a member of the communist party and ran on the communist party ticket in 1934 under the name of Hama. Actually, when we went to get married, I didn't know what my name was going to be. He had adopted the name Hama to save his mother from harrassment for helping him escape from Japan after he had been drafted in the Imperial army. He did not want to serve because he had been active in the student and the union movements in Hiroshima. He was anti-emporer. He wanted *or others* democracy. So, it wasn't unusual for an alien to use an alias. You had a right to as long as it wasn't used to defraud an innkeeper. It wasn't a violation of any law. I knew his wife was Julia, but I didn't know his name was Bordoise.

Of course I immediately got in touch with members of the Greek ILD branch to see if they knew where his family lived; could they get ahold of him; that he had this B on his belt buckle. They said I was not giving them the right information.

Then there was a massive funeral for these two who had been killed on July 5th. There are pictures and stories about that. There was only one limosine in that massive outpouring of men and women down Market Street, and in that limosine Mother Mooney, Anna Mooney, and Mrs. Bordoise were riding. I wanted to walk behind the casket, but I had been asked to ride. So I rode in that procession. I also was one of the speakers at the cemetary for Bordoise. I couldn't control my tears. Somebody said, "My, you are crying." I said, "Why not. A comrade fell in the struggle to better everyone's condition, and I will always remember him for that." I don't know why, but some people think if you are active you don't have feelings and you don't show emotions. You know, this inscrutable mask that you are supposed to wear. But I have never worn a mask. If you have feelings (and sometimes I express them too much) the hatred I have for some people shows, and things like that.

Then right after the funeral came the general strike. And with the general strike came the reign of terror led by the Red Squad, the Intelligence Bureau (which were a group of plain clothes men who did not wear uniforms), deputized American Legionnaires, and all the violent forces of the day.

Yon: They began attacking different headquarters. July 17th, in the morning, I went to party headquarters at 37 Grove.

While I was at the headquarters a woman walked in. A communist party organizer who was very active in the unemployed movement was in the building. Her question to us was "Where am I going to be able to get this paper [the Western Worker] after this is shut down. My husband, a marine engineer, is sick. He just loves the paper and I want to keep him happy and give it to him." Just then the phone rang and Alex answered and said, "This is for you, Elaine." I took the call and was told, "There is a raid going on at the Unemployed Council and the Workers Ex-Servicemen's League lot on Howard Street. They are arresting people by the dozens. What can you do?" I said, "Let them get booked first before I can do anything. I will get down to the Hall of Justice maybe even sooner than they get there. They've got to be booked before I can do anything. Then I'll see what I can do." This woman then said, "Oh, you must be Elaine Black I have heard so much about you and I am happy to meet you." I sort of got up tight about her. Here comes a call that they are raiding the unemployed headquarters. Her question sort of tied in with what was happening. How did she know what was happening? Maybe this [the headquarters at 37 Grove] was going to be next. So I said to Alex, "I am going to have to go down to the Hall of Justice." I was waiting for Louise Todd to come in. So I said, "Will you tell Louise that I am sorry, that I expected her here by now. I am sorry I have got this call and have to leave." I then turned around to this woman and said, "You, no doubt, will be able to get the paper just like the German people under fascism are getting their communist papers. There is a way of getting it. Where it will come from, we don't know at this time. But you will be able to find out. I may be in the same newsboy's box that you are getting it from now." And I thought that is the last I will see of this woman.

I went down to the Hall of Justice and, of course, there were thirty-seven being held. More than that. Some of them were in sort of kangaroo courts held by Steiger and Lazarus, and all the other judges; being given thirty days and twenty days and so on. About thirty two of them remained on \$1,000 vag. We didn't have

Yon: \$32,000 to put up. These people were going to ask for jury trials. They were solid, and they were going to stick to it.

That night the ILD headquarters were smashed so I couldn't go back there. 37 Grove was a shambles, had also been broken into. That night we met with Harry Jackson, who was the head of the Marine Workers Industrial Union, Sam Telford, who was the Secretary, and Joe Wilson, who was then my assistant in the ILD office. There were five of us in Jackson's room on McAllister Street. We were discussing how to get a federal injunction to open the Marine Workers Industrial Union hall which was under martial law. People couldn't go in and people couldn't come out. How could we fight the reign of terror that was going on.

Then one of the men~~s~~ left and we heard a lot of steps coming up. It was the Red Squad. They said to me, "Elaine, what are you doing here with four men?" I said, "You know we were discussing what we could do about your violation of our rights. We were arrested, the five of us, and charged with \$1,000 vag. Now, usually when you are arrested in one place and on the same charge they have a joint trial. First of all, it saves money for the State. It does not save the defense much money because there were five defendants. But they divided us up, two and two and one. I was put on trial by myself. But before that trial happened I was bailed out. So were the others bailed out.

The following Sunday there was a protest meeting at Jefferson Park, and I was arrested again on three other charges: another charge of \$1,000 vag, disturbing the peace, and rioting, and my bail was another \$3,000, which meant \$4,000. So I was put back in jail. The thirty two men who had been arrested on the 17th were still in there. They all voted that we five should be taken out on bail and the others would stay in. So I was back in on Sunday, and the following Saturday the bail was still high.

In the meantime Anita Whitney and Louise Todd were arrested. Ida Rothstein was arrested on various charges. I said, "Get them out first. I can take it." I was the youngest of the lot, and I could take it. (Actually my stay in jails has been very minute, except for that 72 hours down in L.A. it was just for an hour or two. I never spent too much time in any

Yon: of the other arrests.) So, I wasn't too uptight about it, especially since there were thirty two men on the other side who had been there a whole week and hadn't even seen the light of day. On the following Saturday I was still here.

The interesting thing was they brought in a woman (I think it was Tuesday night) raving drunk. She was known as Kentucky Mae. That was her nickname. She was a woman who had worked the Barbary Coast as a young woman. I guess, if she had ever been interviewed, what tales she would have had to tell! She must have weighed two hundred pounds - real husky. Her hair had been hennaed every color. By that time it was green, yellow, almost purple. She was a mess. Usually the drunk women were not put into the main tank. They would keep them separate until they sobered up. This woman was let in the cage by ~~the woman who was~~ the matron of the day. She began screaming "Why do you let me in here? I want to go and get me a commie - my boy friend and I were headed for the waterfront to get those darn commies." But she sort of quieted down a little, maybe because she saw all of us. Every once in a while she said, "Why are they keeping me here? I am headed to clean up the waterfront. The matron called to her and said, "You want to go to the waterfront? That's Elaine Black." In the meantime, before she [the matron] had done this I had offered this woman my comb, and asked would she let me comb her hair because she had to go before the judge; and if she had to go before Judge Steiger, what would they do to her! I just couldn't see this wretch of a person appearing before Steiger, who was a vicious man. So I helped comb her hair. The matron didn't know I had done this. She was away at the time. Louise and Anita were there that night. They were let out on bail later. Kentucky Mae said to the matron, "No, she can't be. She was nice to Kentucky Mae. She can't be."

^{CANNOT}
I forget the incident of the matron trying to provoke. It could have been a bloody mess because we were caged there. Most of the other women were prostitutes. One had been picked up for burglary. We were all in separate cells. We didn't know each other. The only two I knew were the two so-called radicals. Kentucky Mae was taken down with the others, and I didn't think I would ever see that woman again or have any recourse to what happened to her.

Yon:

I had a visitor the following Saturday. I was called out to the cage and was told that the thirty two men prisoners were going out on a hunger strike. I protested that ~~has~~ *This had to be* this been discussed with the strike committee before we go out? Has this been discussed with the party? It is true that these men have been in here since July 17th, but is this the time to have a hunger strike? Would it hurt negotiations. If the people on the outside agreed that we should go on a hunger strike, maybe Monday was the best time to start it.. This was a week end. Who was around? Who would know about it? I thought, "I won't go out." I said, "first of all, you say the demand is for food. I want you to know that in the women's quarters we get two meals a day, so if we strike it would have to be in support of your demand for decent food, for blankets, for showers. We are made to shower every day, so we can't say we are on strike for that. I want to know if this is the opportune time for a strike. Maybe we would have it on Monday when some of us have to go to court." Then I said, "I want you to know that the women eat at this [noon] time, and I will start eating my lunch unless I get the green light that the hunger strike is on and that my striking is in support of the men's demands. I can't demand what they demand. I am getting it."

OK, lunch time came. I am sitting eating, and I am always ready for two or three cups of coffee. I had already cleaned my plate when I was called out. I was told I had a visitor, and that the men were out on strike. I couldn't hear what was going on on the other side. I could hear noises, but not just what it was. I said, "I am going back. I am on my third cup of coffee, and I am going to announce that they need not serve supper to me; that I am joining the men in their hunger strike."

It turned out that whoever brought that message back (to this day I feel it was probably an agent) came with the false information that, yes, it was OK to go ahead. Then the headlines hit the paper. In the Call Bulletin I read it said that the Black woman scabs on comrades. That's how it hit the evening paper. In the meantime they brought in a young YCLer (that is a Young Communist Leaguer) who was arrested on the charge of giving out leaflets. I said, "Oh, gee, were you giving out leaflets on the hunger strike?" And she said, "What hunger strike? It was about an anti-fascist demonstration." My heart sunk, and I said, "Margaret, you have come in --"

Yon: I pointed out to Margaret that she had come in at an inopportune time - that the thirty two men on the other side, who had been in for some time on \$1,000 vag. charge, and who had demanded jury trials, had gone on a hunger strike, and that I had announced that I would go out in support of them. I also said I could not have the evening meal; and that she would have to make up her own mind whether she would join or not. She said, "Of course I will join." I have always been a very robust person, but Margaret was small and thin, and I was worried about her when she said she would go out. She didn't go in to dinner either, or supper. The women got the same meal for lunch as for dinner (or supper, or whatever you want to call it) and so it was rather heavy compared to what the men didn't get. You see, they didn't get lunch and what they got for dinner was a little different.

So we went on strike. We decided that a hunger strike meant a hunger strike. We didn't even drink water the first day and a half so that by Monday we were beginning to get a little bit dehydrated. Then someone said, "You are doing yourself a disfavor by not drinking water. Water is not breaking a hunger strike. You should at least keep up your strength." So we decided we would have half a cup of water three times a day. As a result of the hunger strike we were not in the main tank any more. We were locked in our cells.

Wednesday morning the headlines picked up that the hunger strike was going on and that the Black woman had scabbed. It had reached a New York paper and that is how widespread people realized there was a hunger strike on and that there were thirty two men in jail a couple of weeks by that time.

Wednesday we were informed there was going to be a press conference; and that we would have it in the matron's lunch room. I said, "All right, we will talk to the press and tell them what we think of it." So we go into this matron's lunch room, and there was this table set with a tablecloth, butterballs in fancy figures, rolls, salads, pieces of raw meat on two plates; and they asked how we wanted our meat. Evidently they hadn't told everybody they had asked newspaper reporters there.

Yon: A trustee was yelling, "Elaine Black, Elaine Black, I have some mail for you." He said there was also a telegram. He was near where my cell was supposed to be. I said, "Open the door so I can tell him I am in here." He came in, and there were several post cards and a telegram. The telegram was from the students from Columbia University conveying their sympathy to us, asking me to convey offers of solidarity to the other hunger strikers, and that they [the students] are with us. So I was a little bit relieved that word had gotten out; that we weren't just on a hunger strike, and nobody knew. That article on scabbing was one thing, but most of our people did not read the Hearst press. So I took this telegram and said, "Margaret, look." And she read it. I turned around and said, "We don't need your food. This is our food. This is what will sustain us," and I read the telegram to them. They were very mad, especially the matron. It was the same matron who had put Kentucky Mae up to perhaps beating me, the same matron who had arranged this particular thing. Then we were led back to our cell.

Margaret and I had our menstrual period at the same time, two days before. I guess that they set up this meeting because both of us were complaining about cramps. We were both a little dehydrated, and I had asked for sanitary napkins. Margaret was losing weight much more rapidly than I was, and the matron said, "I am going to send back somebody to see you." Instead, she sent back a photographer to try to get us, in our cells, weeping or something. We were in pain and said, no pictures. They probably thought setting up the meal would probably tempt us to eat.

In the meantime there was a police lieutenant who came and talked to me. Margaret was being weighed. I had already been weighed. They called us out separately to be weighed by the prison doctor. This lieutenant explained to me how he had been a socialist in 1904, and a member of the Teamsters Union. When he joined the police department he decided that socialism and being a policeman didn't jibe, so he dropped his socialist membership. For a while he still maintained his membership in the Teamsters, but he didn't with the socialist movement. He was very concerned about me, and said, "Can't I sneak you in a thermos of chicken soup?" He tried to tell me that the men had candy stashed away and food stashed away, and asked why we were doing this disservice to ourselves with all the other things that women have in common.

Yon: That's where the woman question came in you see. And he was asking, couldn't he bring in the chicken soup? Nobody would know. He would bring it in a thermos bottle, and was I aware that Margaret was losing more weight than I was? I said, "Yes, I've got a few more years on my shoulders. I probably can take it a little better. You can't bring anything in to me, and you will have to discuss it with Margaret." I wouldn't hold it against her. She didn't know what was going on, and she walked into it. In fact, she might have thought twice about giving out leaflets that afternoon because she did have a health problem. But this was our discussion - that he was a socialist and that he knew what was going on, and so forth. I said, "Well, if you were true to your beliefs you would see that the men got out of here, that the men were allowed to shower. You would see that the men did get fresh vegetables. You would see that they did get milk. You would see that that did get blankets in this cold jail."

Later he was made ^{Acting Jailer} guardian of the jail because the chief jailer went back East. He did order fresh vegetables, so he did have some compassion. He thought what he was doing wasn't what he did in his youth. Of course, this was thirty some odd years later. He was demoted, by the way, for ordering all this food, and for giving in to the hunger strikers. So that was the Wednesday incident.

Thursday my mother and daughter arrived from Los Angeles, and one of the officers said to Joyce, "Aren't you ashamed of your mother? She is a jailbird." The officer involved told me this himself. It isn't just what Joyce told me. She said, "No, she's a worker. She is fighting for you too. You'll learn that some day." Then my mother said, "You are going out on bail this afternoon." I said, "No, I am not. The hunger strike is still on. I am not going to have all the headlines say that I left my comrades in the middle of a hunger strike." They said, "Look, your trial is starting Monday. You will have to defend yourself. There won't be an attorney there." That's the first I knew about the way we were to be broken up. Usually there would be two of us at least, or all five, and there would be an attorney there. If you were defending yourself you would still have legal advice.

Yon: This would be the first time I would have walked into court and not have an attorney beside me, defending somebody else maybe, but where I could turn to him and say, "Is this so? Or should I pursue this avenue?"

[My mother said] "You will have to prepare yourself. Therefore it would be a disservice if you stay in jail. And they have the bail." I said, "Look, they could take four others out instead of just me for that amount." They said, "No", and I fought it. But my bail was posted. And there again the headlines said that I deserted my comrades for a nice hot meal. The truth was I didn't have anything but broth for the next four days.

Ken: The other girl was still in?

Yon: Yes, she was still in. The hunger strike lasted until Saturday, and I think she was bailed out shortly thereafter.

Monday I had to appear in court. There was such an overflow at the Hall of Justice that my trial was held in the city hall. This was my first occasion of appearing without an attorney, not as my counsel, but one I could turn to for advice as to - should I pursue this line or drop it? So I had to appear by myself, and do the jury selection by myself. This was at a time when the American Legion convention was going on. The papers were full of what they were going to do to the reds. They were going to put them in Alcatraz and throw the keys away. If they couldn't put them in Alcatraz, they would put them someplace in the mid-Pacific. There was a lot of vigilante terror, and there was really an uproar, which is another chapter in the history of denial of rights. Facing that, I had to conduct the trial. I was convicted for vagrancy.

In the charged they brought out that I was one of those that handed out leaflets on what to do when under arrest; and that was a subversive piece of literature; and that I had made certain remarks about judges. Yes, I had openly said that we had two types of judges in our judiciary system here in San Francisco. We had the type of judge who was an open fascist and who gave us our castor oil straight. Then we had those who gave it with

Yon: orange juice, but they were still part of the establishment. Among those judges I meant were fascists was Steiger. And I have forgotten the other one. Lazarus and Dunn, I believe, were the two who gave it to us with orange juice.

At any rate, I was convinced. The other four defendants were also convicted, (and they had attorneys) on charges of \$1,000 vagrancy. We appealed. However, when it went to appeal, they were all combined. The initial trials should have been together, but they were separate. Yet the appeal went as one. The Appellate Court ruled that the \$1,000. vag charge did not hold any water, for one thing. Then, to come down to straight vagrancy, each one of us did have a salary, as small as it was. Mine was \$10.00 a week.

Certain things in the leaflets on what to do when under arrest may have been a little inflammatory because we took the judiciary and the police department on and pointed out that they were actually at the behest of the employers and big business, and not for the little man or the preservation of the rights of the workers. However, if any other organization had issued it, it wouldn't have been considered inflammatory. It was just advice. The judge in the Appellate Court overturned the conviction and ordered a new trial. The charges were dismissed, and the \$1,000 ceased to exist. In California it is just not used any more against anyone.

Ken: What did the \$1,000. vag mean?

Yon: Under certain sections of the penal code, it covers a lewd and dissolute person without visible means of support. It had several sections, and bail was \$1,000. A vagrant means no visible means of support. So where is one going to get \$1,000? He or she would be forever in jail. Even on appeal there would still be \$1,000. vag, and you would still be sitting there because who had \$1,000? It was just an organization like the ILD that got contributions from people all around. *LOANS/*

Ken: Was the strike over by the time the appeal took place?

Yon: The general strike was over while we were still in jail. I was in the second time, I think, about ten days. I was in, altogether, about two and a half weeks. In the meantime the general strike was over and even the longshoremen were negotiating. The general strike had collapsed. That was a sell out of certain people in the leadership of various unions. But the strike continued in maritime. In the meantime other arrests were

Yon: going on in Sacramento on criminal syndicalism. There was one worker arrested and charged with vagrancy, disturbing the peace and resisting arrest in Sacramento.

Ken: Was there a strike in Sacramento?

Yon: There were strikes in the agricultural area.

Ken: In the Delta Area?

Yon: All around, and in the Tulare area. Most of the men and women arrested had been active in these strikes organizers, or organizing relief for the agricultural and maritime strikers. For instance, the Japanese Agricultural Workers Union sent in truckloads of food, and they were collecting relief and what have you. So that led to their arrest. They were known communists, "activists". We didn't say "activists" in those days, but they were active. So they were arrested and there was a need to raise their bail and to try to get them out.

One of the women arrested was not only pregnant, but she was also an epileptic, and we hoped to get her out first for health reasons. The American Civil Liberties Union just wanted to get certain ones out, and there was a struggle going on. We felt that Lorraine Norman, who was pregnant, should be taken out, and that Nora Conklin, who had a heart condition, should be one of the ones to be bailed out first (not because she was a woman, but she was the oldest). The younger ones could take it. So the ACLU (American Civil Liberties Union) helped with the bail on just those they thought were shining lights, and not in general.

We started a campaign to get signatures to repeal the criminal syndicalism law, which meant getting ~~hundred~~^{thousands} of signatures on petitions to get it on the ballot.

A man was arrested in Sacramento, but Leo Gallagher was involved in a case. George Anderson had a number of cases, and the other friendly attorneys were all involved. So I appeared in court for this Sacramento man who had been arrested. I told the judge he would either have to postpone the case and release this man on his own recognizance (he had been in jail quite a while). The bail money was all tied up. Or I told the judge he could proceed and I would appear as a friend of the court and would do my best to protect this man's rights, and even prepare for an appeal if need be.

YOn: The judge granted me that right, and I cross-examined the prosecution witnesses. In the course of examining the woman who was the head of welfare appeared and I have never forgotten her appearance. She was one of the most gross - a very huge woman. When she sat down on the witness chair she was all over, out in and back, she was so big. She was accusing this man of harrassing her and disturbing the peace. He had come back several times asking for temporary relief, asking for work. She had called him a bum and said he had better leave her office. He said no, he was going to sit there until he got some relief. He had no place else to go - no flophouse to go to even. He needed some temporary relief. And I said to her, "Isn't it true that under section so and so he had that right? You were the only person in the area to whom he could appeal. You were the welfare lady." And I read a certain section of the law.

The judge called me to order and said, "I want to interject something here. You gave me your assurance that you were not an attorney. From the way you are questioning this witness I am led to believe otherwise. Just what legal school did you go to?" I said, "I went to the courts. That has been my only legal training - watching, and being a defendant, and seeing the violations under various laws. Men and women are doing long terms right now under criminal syndicalism because they organized, because they were unemployed, because they turned on somebody's heat so a child wouldn't die from pneumonia. That has been my school. No formal training. In fact, I don't even have a high school diploma."

Ken: What did the judge say?

Yon: He said, "We will continue, and I will look into the matter." The man was found not guilty by the jury. I had been found guilty, but now I won my first case. In the meantime I was out on appeal bond.

That is really what my court experience amounted to then. You sort of learned by ear. You did what you could, ~~and~~ ^{it was court-act,} hoped. I had a feeling I wasn't just fighting for the other guy. I was fighting for myself too. It was my rights I was trying to preserve. I was told I had those rights and I wanted to preserve them. I wanted this country to be what it stood for - a haven for people regardless of their race and their monetary status.

Ken: The criminal syndicalism law was finally repealed, wasn't it?

Yon: No. It is still on the books of California. Many of its sections, throughout the years, the trials of the socialists, the communists, the wobblies [members of the International Workers of the World], the big trial they had in Oakland in which Anita Whitney was one of the victims. Different sections of that (it's a horrendous law with a lot of pages) were declared unconstitutional. But the overall law is still on the books. An attempt was made as late as two years ago down in Southern California to use the criminal syndicalism law. I believe it was in some agricultural strike, believe it or not. Attempts have been made to revive it. And that's one of the reasons all these obnoxious laws [in violation of the Constitution and the Bill of Rights] ought to be taken off the books. But they are now there any time anyone wants to use them.

Ken: After Sacramento, you were out on bail?

Yon: I was out on bail because of the \$1,000. vag charge on July 17th. Then there was the Jefferson Park arrest where I was sent to jail on these other charges. That was a hung jury. All of that was going, going, going, going. Then on March 17th, St. Patrick's Day, - This is a day I remember vividly because at the end of 1934, I think, I had been able to get a coat very reasonably from a clothing manufacturer who at one time had been a socialist. His shop was sort of a good union shop. He didn't mind, at the end of the season, if something was left over, some of the workers bringing in their friends to buy. They couldn't take the clothing out, but he would see who the friend was. If he liked you he would let you purchase a coat. I got a green winter coat. I thought it would be very appropriate to wear my green coat on March 17th, and a green hat also for St. Patrick's Day. We went to have a meeting in Mission Dolores Park. Leo Gallagher came in from Sacramento, and there were a number of ministers who came to the park. We had said we don't want any harassment like what had been going on in Jefferson Park and on the waterfront when we had protest meetings. For years people had been against the criminal syndicalism act. There were liberals like Ella Winters and Lincoln Steffens and others, all opposed to the criminal syndicalism law. There was a wide base [of protest] from all over.

Yon: So we were having this meeting. A young man got up to speak, and all of a sudden the police swooped down. There were about a couple of hundred at the meeting. They [the police] grabbed this man off the bench. So I jumped on the bench and said, "Don't let them take him down. Don't let them take him down by himself. They will beat him up like (and I gave the names of two men who had been beaten up the Saturday before who were a bloody mess when we bailed them out. They had been giving out leaflets when they were arrested.) They will kill him. They are in a murderous mood. Don't let them take him by himself. Go with him."

I was grabbed off the bench, put under arrest. They took us across the street to a church and put us up against a wall. A car drove up and they started to put Johnson in by himself. I raised my voice - "Don't let them take him alone. He has got to go in a patrol wagon with the rest of us. If they get him alone in that car they will beat his brains out, and we mustn't allow that to happen." I pulled out the Bill of Rights that I had in my purse and began reading it. I turned to the officer and said, "You know you are violating these basic rights when you are putting us under arrest. Is this Nazi Germany?" Leo Gallagher came over to see what was happening, with a couple of ministers. Leo and one of the ministers were put under arrest. The minister was released afterwards. Leo wasn't. Altogether there were about eight of us arrested.

We were taken and charged with rioting and refusing to move on, and the trial lasted for quite a while. Leo, despite the fact that he was an attorney in Sacramento, was held. It was very apparent that they were going to try to disbar Leo under pretext that he associated with lewd and dissolute people and that he had violated his oath as an attorney. They were really trying to give him the ax. I knew this because, during the trial, one of the red squad came over and whispered something into the ear of the prosecuting attorney. I could hear Post Street. That was an area near where I lived, but nothing was said. But afterwards I said, "You know, Leo, they are trying to bring out that not only are you connected with a bunch of disturbers of the peace, but also that you are connected with lewd and dissolute people."

Yon: They are going to throw up the fact that Karl and I are living together. Cohabiting and mixed ^{MARRIAGE} is illegal in this state. I am sure that at one point or another they are going to bring it up."

The case went to the jury. It was a hung jury for some of us and dismissal for the others. Leo was one of those convicted. Anita was also convicted, and I have forgotten who the other one was. Oh yes, Johnson. A new trial was set for November. I just had butterflies in my stomach that the prosecution was going to bring up Karl and so forth. I discussed this with Leo and Anita again. I said, "It doesn't make any difference to us. That piece of paper isn't going to do anything for Karl or me. But we must think if they can get Leo on something else. They pinned Al Capone on income tax evasion because they couldn't get him for murders.

Since Karl and I were going to stay together, the only place we could make it legal would be in New Mexico or the State of Washington. We didn't have the money to go any place ~~else~~. The heat was one, not so much on me, but really to disbar Leo because he was a world famous advocate of decency. He had been to Germany where he helped defend Dimitroff in the Riechstag fire. ^{FRAME UP} A man who had studied and taught corporate law had become an advocate and firebrand for workers' rights. He was something else to behold, you know. Our feeling was that they were trying to get Leo. So Anita Whitney loaned us the money to go to New Mexico, We had never been there, either of us. The Mine, Mill and Smelter Strike was on there. The ILD had sent a telegram there offering help, and I had signed it as District Secretary. The local papers reported that the Black woman was on her way there to do her dirty work like she did in other places. So I said to Karl, "we aren't going there." Although Karl and I were going for a very legitimate reason, they would be able to corrupt our motives. So we went to Washington where we had friends.

We got on the train, but Karl and I didn't sit together. We were to cross ~~the~~ state lines, and under the Mann Act they might charge him with transporting me for immoral purposes. He sat in one coach, and I sat in another. We ate in the dining room together, even if we didn't sit together going up there.

Yon: Meanwhile Leo Gallagher was trying to get the case postponed. It was set for the following Monday. So I got a telegram from Ida [Rothstein] congratulating us on our marriage but saying we couldn't spend any time in Washington because the trial was going to start on Monday. We had to return the next day and come back because we had to prepare for the trial.

 In the course of that trial, the re-trial, I said something to the prosecutor about what a shame it was that he was prostituting his oath of office.

 In the meantime Johnson had gotten several beatings, had gone violent, and had to be institutionalized. There were three defendants left. The prosecutor said Johnson was a violent person, and everything else. I said, "How can you say that when it was your clubs and your beatings. You let him starve. And now he has gone off his rocker. Why are you bringing this up? What has this got to do with charges of rioting. Rioting takes three people or more, according to you. There were eight of us originally. How come you are not bringing up what happened to the others?" So he [the prosecutor] said, "Elaine, what I know about your immoral personal life - - "

end of tape

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Ken: We ended up by your being immoral. Let's go on from there.

Yon: I told him further that if he knew anything about my immoral life that had anything to do with the charge of rioting that he should tell it to the jury, and I pounded the table. He did not pursue that further. I wondered if I really would have had the stamina to pound that table and ask him to say what was immoral about my life if we didn't have that legal document, although it was just a few days old.

 The night before the summations to the jury were to take place I took violently ill. The next day I was to sum up before the jury. Instead I landed in Franklin Hospital. They kept me under observation. They weren't sure just what was wrong. Finally there were complications so I stayed in the hospital three weeks. While I was still in the hospital the judge issued an edict

Yon: that if I did not appear the following Monday he would confiscate the bail. It was probably a ploy, staying in the hospital that long. Who stayed in the hospital three weeks for just an appendectomy? So I got out of the hospital and appeared. When I got there the judge let out a gasp. He said, "I didn't realize you were that ill Miss Black. You may remain seated as you address the court and the jury. Should you need a rest period, just tell the bailiff, and you may use my chambers to rest."

Well, I summed up to the jury what I thought was the evidence of the case and how they should not find us guilty; that finding us guilty would be a violation of our constitutional rights to petition, to protest, to speak. Gallagher did the summation for himself. Anderson [George] did it for the other defendants. And the jury came back with, I believe, a verdict of "not guilty" at that time. I don't recall another appeal in that case. This was already the re-trial. In the meantime there were all other kinds of cases going on.

Ken: You mentioned the Eureka Lumber Strike. Were you involved in that?

Yon: Yes, that was before the re-trial of the Mission Dolores case and around the time of the appeal of the criminal syndicalism law. Three lumber workers were murdered at the lumber gates. Their names were Kaarte, Edlund and Lampella. These men had been murdered during the lumber strike. A lot of arrests took place and the ILD was called in to help with the defense. They were killed on the picket line on June 21, 1935.

Ken: The Union was, I believe, the Lumber and Sawmill Workers Union. Was it a TUUL union?

Yon: No. It was an AFL Union - not even CIO - just American Federation of Labor.

Ken: Were there a lot of wobblies in that Union?

Yon: Well, prior to that, in the sawmill and lumber workers industry, there had been a history of IWW (Industrial Workers of the World) organizing and so on. Most of them had a tradition of being very good unionists. The lumber barons had a history of trying to beat down unionization. The California lumber owners weren't any different than those in Washington or Oregon, or other areas. Around that case and the others that were arrested

Yon: there was quite a campaign. The whole city was aroused. Anybody that was a decent person was aroused by the arrests, the conditions in the jail, and the high bail. We helped with the campaign and we sent attorneys. The ACLU [American Civil Liberties Union] participated because some of the workers wanted the ACLU.

However Besig [Ernest], who for years was the Northern California Director of the ACLU, played a very nasty role in the Eureka area, which caused the ILD to issue a leaflet pointing out that if he wasn't a paid agent of the lumber barons he was then someone who didn't know his ABC's as far as unions. He went to the Central Labor Council meeting of Humboldt County and said, "So and so is a Red, and so and so is a Red, whether they were arrested or not, and regardless of the charges. He was fingering people in a small community, which to me was playing the role of an agent, provocateur or an informer.

There was also a difference of opinion with the ACLU then, as there had been in the 1934 bail of the criminal syndicalism victims, as to who should come out first, and who shouldn't.

For years they held memorial services in Eureka. The first memorial service, in 1936, they were still trying to raise funds for the families and to pay funeral expenses.

Then in 1936 there were a number of cases, the main ones around agricultural struggles. Salinas, of course, was most notorious of that period. The lettuce strike which led to a congressional investigation under the leadership of La Follette was one. There again the union that went out on strike was the Fruit and Vegetable Shed Workers, A.F. of L., which was composed primarily of white workers - highly skilled. Not field workers. However, Filipino field workers came out in sympathy and also had their own demands. The Associated Farmers sent in a Colonel Sanborne who took over from the elected officials to run that City and County. This led to a wide reign of terror against the AFL workers. The Filipino workers, who were not in a union, just had an association.

The Fruit, Vegetable and Shed Workers had sent a telegram to the International Labor Defense that some of their members had been arrested and they would like our help. So I went down there. But, by the time I got there, with all the red-baiting that the Associated Farmers

Yon: and others could put down, some of the misleaders in the AFL said, "We are not going to have anything to do with the ILD." However, the husband of one of the women who had been arrested (she was known as Happy Brannan) -

Ken: Is she still alive?

Yon: Yes. She is still alive - is in a wheelchair down in Arizona. Her husband, Ray, who had been a machinist and then became a fruit tramp, a shed worker, followed the crops in California. During the war he was in war work. At that time he said, "I don't care whether they are red russian or purple russian, or the man from the moon, or green cheese, if they are going to get Louella out of jail, I am going to get their support -- Don't tell me now that I can't get Louella out because you've changed your mind. Our executive board voted to call these people in, and I am sticking by the Executive Board decision."

I went with him to the county courthouse, the jailhouse, to bail Mrs. Brannan out. And when I walked into the courthouse there was one great big six-footer of a deputy sheriff, and he said, "Who are you?" And I said, "Elaine Black," and he went and let out a holler, "Elaine Black is here." Then all of a sudden a large number of deputies appeared, all with guns drawn. I don't know what they expected. I put my purse on the counter, and he said, "What are you doing here. What are you doing here?" I said, "I came to find out about bail for Mrs. Brannan. I don't know the set-up in this County. Where do I post bail?" He said, "Do you have the money with you?" I said, "No". The reason I said no is I had an intense feeling that if I said "yes" something might happen to me on the way out. I said, no, I had left it at union headquarters until I found out where I had to go and place bail. He said, "Well, it's no longer the amount you thought it was." (They had raised the ante). "You have to see the district attorney." So finally I did get to the proper authority and we did place the bail. But those were some of the harrassments - the attempts of not to have workers out on bail to pursue their strikes. I made several trips to Salinas, and the headlines were always sort of "Army of citizens mobilizes for war on communists". That was in September of 1936, in the Call Bulletin.

Ken: Did you stay overnight there at any time?

Yon: I did.

Ken: Who did you stay with?

Yon: I stayed in what was then known as auto courts. They were sort of cabins, very rough, and you put your car in between. When I got off the train on one of the return trips, I was suddenly surrounded by twenty Filipino workers, and they said, "We have come here to protect you, Miss Black, because the vigilantes say they are going to get you. They are going to stop you whichever way they can, and we are going to protect you because we feel that you and your organization are doing things to preserve our rights and to preserve the rights of all the people." Because, like this headline said, "Elaine Black slipped out of a downtown hotel last night as police and highway patrol sought her." Things like that were appearing in the newspapers - "Elaine Black is one of them. Elmer Hanoff is another" (naming names) and went on, "I wish to give you the names of all of the reds who are active in the strike." My activity in the strike was, after the arrests, coming there to try and preserve their rights and to see that they had proper trials, fair trials, in a community that was all pent up.

Ken: Altogether, how many were arrested?

Yon: There was quite a number. Some were held overnight. Some were held, fingerprinted, and then let go. There was a lot of wheeling and dealing with some of the hierarchy of the AFL, which was exposed too; and with the Teamsters Union at that time.

When we got up in the morning in this auto court, in the car that brought me there there was a noose hanging. On the noose was, "Elaine you are next." There had been some violence. I don't have all the statistics here. That is part of the files that are missing. But I have just one sheet which says, "Vally citizens mobilize for war on communists." Everyone became a communist. Anyone who had anything decent to say about the strikers, about their right to strike and to get better conditions was a communist.

The Associated Farmers put out the American Citizen in which they carried a mug shot of me. I believe it may have been one of the pictures that was taken in 1932, or way back in 1931, where they go back into a whole series of names that I presumably used. That was to incite the people in

Yon: Salinas against me. There were a lot of deputies going around with pickhandles and green arm bands who just went through the streets en masse and tried to clear the streets. It got so violent that there had to be this Congressional hearing. [La Follette].

I was never subpoenaed to come and tell my story. But there was a Congressional hearing which did expose all the horrendous frameups of the Associated Farmers, the growers and other business interests trying to keep the lowest paid in the fields, the Filipino workers, from organizing and striking; and also the shed workers, who were the higher paid, who went out on strike. So they weren't cleared or given their right to strike either.

Ken: Did they finally win the strike?

Yon: No. They didn't, and quite a number of shed workers were blacklisted. Some of them went on to follow other crops. Others came up to the San Francisco area, or went to the Los Angeles area, and went into other industries.

The Brannans continued to follow the crops until the war, and then they settled in San Francisco and went into war work. Mrs. Brannan and I went on a speaking tour throughout California on the Salinas case, and to get support for the strikers and those who were arrested. We spoke in Los Angeles and San Diego, and up North. And she became an active ILD member. She had never been in any organization except the Shed Workers. So she then became an active ILD worker and helped out in the subsequent cases. She was really quite something to behold. She had been exposed to trade unionism, and now she was able to, in the civil rights fight, take hold and become part of it - not only for her own defense, but for the defense of others.

In 1936 also one of the gold mine workers strikes took place. There were two different strikes. One was around Grass Valley and the other was near the Nevada City gold mines.

Ken: What unions were those?

Yon: Those were the Mine, Mill & Smelter Workers, AFL (later CIO) at the time.

Ken: And what were they striking for?

Yon: For better conditions for working, and better conditions in the mines. In those days

Yon: they were horrendous. Of course mines in that area have shut down now. Gold seems to have petered out, or they are holding it for a still higher price. I don't know. But both strikes resulted in quite a lot of violence. That was in a different period.

In 1936 the strike results in some arrests. Again I went up there to bail out a man by the name of Workman who had tuberculosis, or it may have been silicosis from working in the mines. He had been arrested as a result of the strike.

The people in the Bay Area here, trade unionists, decided to send a caravan of food and clothing and other relief up to Nevada City. And Longshoremen went. Karl by then was a longshoreman, a member of the union. So I, having to go up there to place bail, got a ride with Joe White, a Black longshoreman who is now deceased. He was one of the first Black longshoremen in the union prior to the strike, the 1934 strike, so that he was a long time unionist. On this caravan to Nevada City there were hundreds of cars and a couple of truckloads of food and clothing. Proceeding up there we had a highway patrol escort. The AFL Central Labor Councils of San Francisco and Alameda county, and other areas, all cooperated. The reason I am going into detail about the cars is that the Associated Farmers and others accused me of appearing at scenes of riots and disappearing in my chauffeured cars. So I am going into specific details about this black packard we were in. The driver was Joe White, a longshoreman on the Executive Board of Local 10. We proceeded up and we were suddenly taken off the main highway and told we were going to rendezvous here because someone else was coming up from Sacramento to meet us here. I went to the leaders of the Needle Trade Unions and to some of the longshoremen who were in the caravan. I said, "I smell a rat. They are keeping us here because they are getting ready for something up there." We were probably ahead of schedule because we had no breakdowns or anything. This long caravan of cars was full of men, and women, and some had their children with them because they were going to show their support with the families of the gold miners.

It was a Sunday. When we finally got to Nevada city and went up to the union hall there was hardly anyone there. Yet they knew the caravan was coming. There were just a couple of people there, and everybody asked, where are the strikers? There is supposed to be a rally here. We are supposed to make the presentation [of the food]. They said "Oh they are meeting you down at the mines. They

Yon: are not meeting you here." And I said, "before I got down to the mines I have to go over to the jail. Joe, do you want to go with me to the jail? Otherwise wait here." Joe said, "No, we can catch up with them. You go and see." I went into the courthouse, and the jail also. I was told, "Oh, the sheriff isn't here. He is down at the mine." I said, "Where do I place the bail?" He said, "Oh, the sheriff is the one who has to get it." So I said to Joe, "I will have to go to the mine. I can't stay around here. I can't be standing around without papers. There is no one here to give me papers so I can take Workman out so maybe he can speak to the rally." That was the plan - that we get him out on bail so he could speak to the miners. So we went down to the mines. There were a lot of cars. And we all proceeded up to the top of the hill. There were some families there, but not as many as we expected. And we turned back, and there were these deputized men coming up with pickhandles and everything else. I said, "We had better try to get out of here, as many as we can. This is a trap." Well, having come in later our car was in a different position than most and we were able to get out. We went back to the headquarters and told them, "Look, that was a trap. We sensed it was a trap when we were stopped miles out of Nevada City, presumably waiting. "And it is an entrapment. They are being massacred up there on the hill. Can you get other forces up there?"

In the meantime I was on trail in San Francisco for another issue. The headlines were "Black woman being sought as leader of riot." When we hit the Alameda Ferries, there were the headlines that I had escaped in my chauffeured car in the Oakland Tribune, and that I was being sought on the charge of rioting. Well, when I went into court the next day I said, "If they are looking for me, and they say I was a rioter, they knew I was going to be here." I said in front of the jury, "Why aren't they here to serve a subpoena on me if I am charged with rioting? That is some more false headlines in the fight for civil rights."

Ken: What happened up there after you left?

Yon: Well, they did attack, and there were some that were injured, and they broke up a spirited show of solidarity. By the way, there is still a woman who was in the Needle Trades Executive Board, Zena Druckman, still alive. She is retired. And she was in one of those cars as a member of her union delegation. So she perhaps would have a different view of what then happened because, frankly, I

Yon: didn't stay. First of all, I had \$2,000 on me that belonged to alot of workers. I wasn't about to have it confiscated. I went down to meet the sheriff to talk to him, going down hill. When I saw him coming up hill I realized there were a lot of other people and I shouted back, "Watch it, watch it, it's more than just the sheriff." I had been told the sheriff was there, and when I got there I couldn't see the sheriff. I was really looking for him. So I wasn't about to have that money confiscated and have them say I didn't have it or something. So Joe said, "We are getting out of here. We are not going to stay to see what's happening." So we did not stay to see what happened. That is correct. We did disappear from the scene, but not because we had started the riot. ~~There was~~ quite an investigation.

Well, there was quite an investigation of the State AFL at the San Francisco Central Labor Council. It was someone from the State Federation who had arranged that side play, in with some of the misleaders of labor. There was quite a hassel. Jack Shelley, who later became congressman and mayor, helped expose Scharrenberg and Vandeleur. If certain strikes in the state didn't suit them, they were going to see the workers lose out.

Ken: Scharrenberg came from where?

Yon: From the Sailors Union of the Pacific. Paul Scharrenberg was in the State Federation, if I remember correctly. Vandeleur was head of this area, maybe in the State, and Scharrenberg was high up.

Ken: What union was Vandeleur in?

Yon: I don't remember the union. I remember him only as a big shot in the Central Labor Council, and in the State Federation. I don't remember actually what union he represented. In fact, I was given the floor at the Central Labor Council to expose that ploy that went on, and I spoke there and got more support for the gold strikers. But they didn't send any more caravans.

Ken: What happened finally, with the strike?

Yon: I did have to go up there afterwards and bail our Workman. I went back to Nevada City and posted bail. I did not attend any sessions of the trial because, at the same time, there were other cases, including my own, going on.

There were headlines that I was involved in a riot. Then there were similar charges which would make it difficult. I am sorry, but I don't have all

Yon: those facts and figures. If I had the scrapbook that the ILD kept at that time things would be in sequence, and it would be much easier. I have never gone back to the library to look at the newspapers. Perhaps if somebody could look at the newspapers of the day, they could get it more in sequence. You know, what trial I was involved in here, charged with creating another riot. It may have been the Mission Dolores case.

There were so many other things happening - the King, Ramsey Conner case, the Modesto case - all going on. And long trials, and some of the men sent to San Quentin. There was this monthly visit of different groups to San Quentin, and meeting with them.

The Spanish Civil War started, and there was a lot of activity there. The Japan war on China. All those things were going on simultaneously. There was a lot of activity. There were mass meetings and relief meetings going on. One of the arrests (I believe it was the final arrest) was in front of the California Hall at Turk and Polk where the Nazi Bund was having a rally. On the outside there were hundreds of anti-fascists marching against the Nazis.

Ken: Who organized it?

Yon: The ILD and other civil rights forces - trade unions.

I was not supposed to be on the line at the time. George Andersen and I were to be the observers. We had obtained a room (this was during the day) across the street at a hotel so that we could look at what was going on. We had bail funds on hand. George was one of the trustees. I have forgotten who else. There were a couple of other people in the room so they could have a bird's eye view of what was going on. I think one was from the Western Worker. And this peaceful picket line was marching around and around the hall with their anti-fascist banners and booing every time they got close to the hall. There was a swastika flying from the hall. Suddenly there was an attack by the police. From my vantage point I could see that they were converging on where Anita was standing - Anita Whitney who was quite an elderly woman. They were coming from an angle and she seemed to be the target. I said to George Andersen, "I can't take this any more", and just rushed down to the hall, and rushed across the street just as they began attacking Anita and dragging her down the steps. So they dragged me too. We were charged with rioting and a whole lot of other things. There were a number arrested in that case.

Yon: During the course of that trial some of us who were defending ourselves refused to give our personal addresses. We gave office addresses where we could be reached night or day, on the basis that our homes had been invaded and there had been attacks. In my particular case, I stuck to the guns of not giving an address other than the ILD. It was decided that Anita Whitney would give her own address because she had run many times on the Communist Party ticket for high office; had considerable property on Telegraph Hill that had been in the family for years; and her name appeared in the telephone directory with her phone number. The name Elaine Black did not appear in any telephone directory. Therefore I would stick to my guns not to give a home address.

The judge in the Modesto case (a case of marine workers having been arrested on a framed up charge of murder) had ruled that the agent provocateur, who was in the employ of the shipowners, did not have to give an address where he was staying and being kept in so-called protective custody while he was testifying. His testimony was against the Modesto defendants. The judge had ruled he did not have to give it, and that was in the high crime of felony with the defendants facing the gas chamber at the time. Yet the judge ruled that the prosecution witness did not have to give an address. Therefore, to try to establish a precedent (mine was just a misdemeanor) I refused to give an address. There was a co-relation on the basis of law, and although I wasn't a lawyer it could come up in the appeal should there be a conviction.

This was in 1937. I was cited for contempt by Judge Lazarus before whom I was again appearing for a jury trial. The only jail sentence I have ever done (I have been in jail weeks waiting for bail, or overnight, and things like that) was the twenty hours for contempt that Judge Lazarus placed against me for refusing to give a home address.

I did that the hard way. I would do about an hour, then it would go to a higher court on appeal, and a new bond would be placed. I would be surrendered. The bail would be lifted, and I would report. I used to like corned beef and cabbage, and I knew that Tuesday was the day they had it in the county jail. I would always try to arrange that it would be a Tuesday when I would surrender. And I would make the matron put down whether it was an hour or twenty seconds so it would go against the twenty hours. I finally did the twenty hours. It went on appeal and so on. In fact I even went back to a National Convention of the ILD in Washington D.C. where

Yon: Congressman Vito Marcantonio, was the president of the ILD, presided; where there were greetings from President Roosevelt and other outstanding people on the good work the ILD was doing in support of civil rights. Then I came back and did another two hours.

To come back to the trial - in the course of the trial I called Judge Lazarus a racist. He said, "How can you call me a racist? Why, I have even signed your Scottsboro petition. I have awakened at four in the morning to listen to you plead for lower bail for one who was in jail." I said, "But, Judge, when anyone of Filipino extraction appears before you with a valid claim for back wages or something, you insult him. You call them monkeys and rapists of our white women and tell them to go back where they belong. And they lose their cases for back wages time after time if they appear before you. And that is racism." He said, "I am sorry I raised that question."

He raised the question in the course of my addressing the jury. I said if they find us guilty they will be guilty of being in favor of a Hitler type government. We were protesting the presence of such filth as the Nazi Bund in the United States. Therefore they would be guilty of violating our rights of petition, our rights of free speech, our right to organize, if they found us guilty. The judge said how can we equate what is happening in Germany to this country. And I said, "Well, what were we doing? We were picketing the Nazi Bund. We were in support of people's rights all over the world." That again resulted in a hung jury. I believe there was a retrial also. But in the court of it there was a court ruling that I had to give an address. They upheld Lazarus' contempt of court. But in a major case where men faced death sentences they upheld the judge's ruling in favor of the prosecution. These men [the Modesto Boys] did time in San Quentin and Folsom. Eventually there was a lot of campaigning and they got them out on parole. Some had served their sentences.

I want to go back to when the Spanish Civil War Started. Many of us didn't realize the import, the impact, and what it meant, that fight in Spain, the fascist forces. But J.B. McNamara, who had been in jail since 1910, had been in and out of Folsom, who had been beaten up for his standing up for the rights of men in prison, he sent a letter to the ILD and said, please do not send me the money from the ILD prison relief. My comrades in Spain need it more than I do. See that it gets to my comrades

Yon: in Spain. He was the first one, I think, who realized the full impact. He was a man! I never met his like before or since. And I have met people from all over the world in the course of my work for the ILD. They would come here from abroad, and they wanted to go see the political prisoners. The labor people would get in touch with the ILD, and arrangements had to be made. It may be that local delegations shouldn't go so the "outsiders" could see the prisoners. So, even meeting these people, I never met a man of the stature of J.B. McNamara. I think anyone that had any recourse with him would agree. I have a number of letters that he sent me, but that's something else again. I will not go into the letters.

In 1938 there was another gold strike, and that was based primarily in Grass Valley and up to Truckee. There were one hundred and thirty miles of picket lines. They had sent for the ILD to help them in their defense. There were vigilante attacks. I would go with the truck along the picket line. They would bring coffee in milk cans and leave it. Then, I believe it was in April, 1938, the vigilantes drove whole families, miners families, out of their homes and into the cold. It was quite cold yet in April there. They were sort of driven out of the county and they made their way in whichever way they could to Sacramento.

At that time attorneys George Andersen and Herb Resner and myself met them. They had stopped on their way and telephoned that they were on their way and had no place to go. They were out of their homes. We took them to the fair grounds. Then a committee went to see Governor Merriam demanding food and tents and medical care because some of these women and children were quite ill, and some of the men too. A good many of them had rashes. It may have been from the food they had been eating, or not eating. There was a lot of reaction in that respect. Merriam had State Police take us bodily and throw us out of his office against the marble walls of the Capitol, and told us to get out of there.

At that time, although I wasn't quite sure of it, I thought I was pregnant. And the blow up against the wall caused me great distress and I was quite ill. But we did get them to put up tents at the fair grounds, and then I went back to San Francisco. I stayed in bed a couple of weeks and had a doctor.

Yon: There was a question mark as to whether I was pregnant or not. It turned out that I was. So my activities for the rest of 1938 were quite limited. I had a rather difficult pregnancy. It may have been the blow.

Ken: Was this pregnancy planned?

Yon: We had been talking about should we have a child. Joyce had come to live with us in 1936. Do we have the means for another child? Karl's mother had written, when the sisters had appealed to her to break up the romance, that if her son is happy she is happy; she hopes there would be issue, of course, and that the issue would be male. That is the tradition in Japanese families that the first born should be a son, and then his son takes over, and so forth. We had talked about it off and on. Then we decided that maybe we would. So we tried, and nothing happened. Then we decided we would wait until Karl got back from Alaska because he was going up there as a union representative for the Alaska Cannery Workers Union as well as being a longshoreman. The Alaska work is seasonal. So we would wait until he got back from Alaska. So, lo and behold, I got pregnant, after we decided to wait. It is just like we know families who adopt children, and then they had natural children almost immediately. So in a way planned, and yet not at that specific period. It happened when we decided we would stop trying.

That's when my activity during 1938 was sort of limited, although I did appear for certain cases. I was called in at that particular period and made a plea for lower bail for a couple of young people who had been arrested around Youth Day, and bail had been set very high. Judge Teresa Meikle and Edith Wilson, who was from the District Attorney's office, called me in to Judge Meikle's chambers after I had made this plea for lower bail. And they said, "You know, Elaine, you are a born Portia. Why didn't you take up law? If you want to, we can help getting you into law school." I said, "I am not even a high school graduate." - "Oh, we could arrange that." And they went on, "You ~~could~~ ^{know} you really would have to give up your activities." I said, "On the basis of getting me to give up activities you would never get me to agree to become a Portia. As of right now, I am too busy having a family." Both of them jumped. They didn't realize that, and they wanted to know when. And I said it will probably be the beginning of January next year. They didn't know I had been made an offer in 1934 by the head of the Law School at the University of California, Radin, and I had turned down his offer to go to law school. Evidently, I don't know whether I had such good courtroom manners or what, or absorbed

Yon: what certain laws were perhap . I do have a way with words, but right now I seem to be stuttering to grasp the right words. But that was a long time ago.

Ken: Since we are discussing a family - with Joyce up here, what was her feeling about your having another child?

Yon: Well, frankly, we didn't discuss it with her. I think in those days these open discussions with children - -

Ken: She wouldn't have noticed you were pregnant?

Yon: Something had taken place back in 1937, when I was at the convention, that had a great deal to do with Joyce's well being. As I said earlier, her father hadn't, for five years, done anything about her - taken her on vacations or anything. Then, in 1937 when I was back East (I sent her to my mother every holiday in case Ed wanted to see her, and we had to borrow money to do that) he did come by. He may have still read the Western Worker or something, or his parents read it and would tell him that I was back East at a convention and that Joyce had gotten in touch with them. He came and took her.

When I got back from the convention mother called me and said, "You know Eddy came and took Joyce, but he promised to have her back here yesterday." She called me the day after he was supposed to bring her back. It was around Joyce's birthday. I had just gotten back the day before. So instead of sending the package I had gotten for her birthday to my mother, I sent it to Ed, to Los Vegas. I thought he would eventually bring her up. We waited until it was almost time for school to start. Just before school started, at two in the morning, Ed called and said, "You are not going to have her back," and hung up. So I called my mother, even though it was then about two thirty in the morning. I told her we have to get to Los Vegas because school opens up here next Monday. I got the next train out, picked up mother, and we went to Los Vegas. It was just a general delivery address, but I remembered the name of the woman who ran one of the boarding houses where Ed first went to live, and I looked that up and went there. It was about six thirty A.M. We took a taxi from the depot, went there, and knocked at the door. It turned out the woman was the mother of the woman with whom Ed was living. I asked her

Yon: about Ed and she said, "No, he is not here." And I said, "Look, if you are not going to tell me where I can find him I am going to charge you with being an accessory after the fact of kidnapping because I am going into court and fight this out. We had an agreement and the agreement has been broken. School is starting and she is not back in time for school." So she finally broke down and gave me the address.

We went there, rang the doorbell the longest time. Joyce stuck her head out and then she slammed the door in our face. I began ringing the bell some more, and finally Ed, who was still three quarters in a stupor, came to the door. It seemed that his wife worked until three in the morning as a night operator, supervisor, there in the telephone company, and then they went out partying. So he wasn't ready to appear. But with the commotion, and Joyce not opening the door, and my thumb on the doorbell (I wasn't letting go), he finally came and said, "What do you want?" I said, "I think you ought to know what I want. School starts tomorrow and I've come to pick up Joyce." So, she is sitting there and not saying anything, and Ed was in too much of a stupor. I said, "Is it all right, since we are here and the train doesn't leave until five thirty tonight, if we take her to Boulder Dam to see it. (He was working on the dam and had been for several years). We will have breakfast downtown. She is up now and obviously not going to go back to bed." He said, "If she wants to go, it's all right." So she said, "Allright.," because if her father said it is all right to go she will go. I didn't understand all this play, that if her father said it was all right to go, she would go.

The first thing mother and I asked her when we got to the restaurant was why she closed the door. And said said, "You ought to know. You made the bargain." I said "What do you mean, I made the bargain. What bargain?" She said, "Daddy was to have nothing to do with me for five years, and then it would be his five years, and I would make up my mind with whom I wanted to stay, and I was to have nothing to do with you or anybody connected with you, even if it was your lawyer, George Andersen." I said, "That's a damn lie. Our agreement, Joyce, was that if he didn't come to pick you up in September when school started in Los Angeles, it meant he wanted grandma to send you to school in Los Angeles, and that you were to be in my custody

Yon: while school was on, and that he would come on holidays. How many holidays did he come to see you? How many things did he sent you? She said, "What do you care? You didn't even send me anything for my birthday." I said, "What do you mean?" This was August, and I had sent it to her the week end of July 27th, which was her birthday. I don't think we discussed ~~this~~ *my pregnancy* with her. I was quite ill, she sensed. She was quite disturbed for her age.

Ken: You were able to maintain all these activities, and still take care of Joyce after school and so on?

Yon: We had neighbors who were friendly, and who were trade unionists, in a couple of places where we lived. In fact when Karl went to Alaska I gave up the apartment and moved in with one of my neighbors so that she could take care of me.

Ken: Did Joyce ever resent the fact that you were spending a lot of time away from home?

Yon: I imagine she did, and then got very resentful when her father told her that was the reason he hadn't been near her. She said, "If you go back and tell my father that's a lie, then I'll go back with you. You're telling me it's a lie, but you won't say it in front of daddy."

Ken: How old was she then?

Yon: She was ten.

Ken: Did you go back?

Yon: I went back ~~+~~ *CONFRONTED* Ed. *She came to SAN FRANCISCO with me.*

Joyce ran away a couple of times, and went back to daddy because she still remembered the gifts he sent her. I finally had to break down and tell her, and said, "Look, every gift you got, the moccasins, the Indian dolls, and whatever, the Easter baskets, Karl and I would borrow money to see that you had them. They were sent in Ed's name. Also the birthday package they denied they got." Finally I threatened to sue through the postal service because I had insured it. It contained some material I had gotten in Canada on the way back from the ILD Convention, and also some paints. She was supposed to go back to (I've forgotten the full name) the California Art School. She was quite an artist at the time, and they thought she was very talented. After school she was supposed to go there and take a course on a scholarship. She was just ten at the time. Her dad told her she wasn't an

Yon: artist. That's something she never did go back into. So all those things were in that package. What did they give her on her birthday was an apron that a neighbor had sent. Her attack was that a neighbor had remembered her birthday and sent an apron with her initials, but nothing from us. The package was finally sent to our San Francisco address and contained some items my parents had sent her also.

Ken: I know there is a lot about the Bridges case all over. But you did have a part in it, so why don't we hear a little bit about that.

Yon: The part the ILD played in the various hearings and deportation cases (not just Bridges, but the various cases going on) was to get mass support to appeal for deportation charges to be dropped. In fact there were a number of deportation cases where the bail was up. Long after, in the fifties, I got some bail back that had been posted in 1934 for a Mexican-American. He was a Mexican-American, but they charged that he was an alien. And all those years the deportation bail was up. It was quite something. He was the father of nine children. But it took all those years (almost twenty years) before the bail was released. And he remained in this country.

During the Bridges trial I attended some of the hearings that were held on Angel Island, and you could only get on the Island by special permit. I had a pass from the Department of Labor which then had the jurisdiction over the Immigration section. Now it is under the Department of Justice. So a permit was issued to the representative of the International Labor Defense, it being a recognized organization that did work in defense of people. During several of the hearings, according to newspaper reports, while I was there, my name was mentioned in the prosecution saying, "Do you know *she did this?* her husband?" And Harry said, "Yes, he is a member of my union. And I even danced with her." It kept coming up - unrelated actually. Certainly Bridges, and the ILA at that time, then the ILWU, had worked with the ILD on cases that pertained to longshoremen and others whose cases were in the realm of the fight for civil rights for workers and for all.

Doyne Know

Yon: As I mentioned earlier, there was all this activity going on about Spanish relief, the Abraham Lincoln Brigade, the support of the Chinese people in their fight against the war Japan was waging on them; the different delegations coming, speaking, the arranging meetings, picketing scrap going to Japan in 1939. I was then active, and am still to this day, first it was in the Maritime Federation Auxiliary, then the Alaska Cannery Workers Auxiliary, then the International Longshoremen and Warehousemen's Union Auxiliary, as far as the different names go. They were supporting all those actions, those picket lines, coming down with their children.

In 1938, when the picketing was going on, Karl was one of the picket captains picketing a Japanese ship at that point. And he was pulled off the picket line by the then Red Squad or Intelligence Bureau in San Francisco. He was not taken to the prison on violating the picketing ordinance, or disturbing the peace, or anything else. But they took him aboard this Japanese ship on which the scrap was being loaded and which the picket line was directed against. There were hundreds of Chinese on that line. There were times when there were 10,000 people even. To show that the powers that be do not care whose bedfellow they are, at that time they wanted to sell scrap iron to Japan, so they were great allies and thought Japan was doing good in China. There was a big force outside. After all what Japan was doing in China, they were fighting the Chinese Communists, so it was "good". They killed the people of Nanking, and that was "good." The captain of the boat asked Karl, "What do you think is going to happen to your mother in Hiroshima if you keep up these activities?" This shows that there was collusion there; that the police forces, if they happen to be on the side of the employer or the side of the imperialists, whether they are Japanese, or whether they are United States, or what have you, they are on that side if it serves their purpose. At this point they certainly brought it to the fore. They didn't arrest Karl that day. He was released, and the fact that this captain knew where his mother was is another indication of collusion and the togetherness of imperialists. So I was on the picket line a couple of times. Joyce went with me on the picket line. She remembers that.

Ken: Were you pregnant at that time?

Yoneda

Seventy-two

Yon: Still pregnant. In fact one of the first picketlines Tommie was on was scrap to Japan in 1939.

Ken: When was Tommy born?

Yon: He was born January 10th, 1939. There was still, as I say, those arrests going on. So when I went to the hospital I had some bail money with me. But first, Tom Mooney was released, on Saturday, January 7th, and I was supposed to go. I had a seat in the assembly chambers and was to be there as a participant in the granting of a full pardon by Governor Olsen (Culbert Olsen) to Tom Mooney. My doctor, Dr. Foster, said I couldn't go. Although she had in her book that I would probably have the child at the end of January or the beginning of February, I said it was going to be sooner. She wouldn't let me go to Sacramento. Therefore there was that one empty seat in the assembly chambers which everybody wondered about (you couldn't get a pass). Joyce and I sat home listening to the radio. When Governor Olson asked if any man had any reason to think that Thomas Mooney should not be granted a full and unconditional pardon, there was sort of a second of silence on the radio. I became hysterical and crying because there had been a threat to the ILD by some person, an anonymous man, that he was going to try and see that Mooney does not get off free. There was this apprehension - would it happen? Of course we had relayed this message that there might be attempts - so that when there was that one empty seat they wouldn't let anybody in because there was nobody else with a pass. So Joyce started shaking me and saying, "Mother stop crying. He's going to be free. He's going to be free." She knew Mooney as I did by having visited him while he was in the San Francisco City jail during some of his trials, and also going to San Quentin to visit him. So she was very well aware of what was happening. She said, "He's going to be free." Then, of course, he was free. But I was not there.

The next day, as the world knows, Mooney came to San Francisco and there was this massive outpouring of humanity that walked with him up Market Street. Of course I was in no condition to march, but Karl drove me down to the waterfront so that I could see him come off the ferry boat and start walking up

Yon: Market Street. Then I was driven back to the City Hall where I had a pass again to sit with all the dignitaries. I sat there, and one of the Methodist ministers (I have forgotten his name now) who was very active in the civil rights fight, in the fight against criminal syndicalism, and the fight for free speech was on the platform next to me. He said "Miss Black, I haven't seen you lately." And I said, "Well, I am anticipating." He said, "When?" I said it might be any day now. So he quietly left the seat next to me, and Anita Whitney sat down.

Ken: Did you name him Tom after Tom Mooney?

Yon: Yes, he was the godfather, and Louise Todd was his godmother. In fact, his middle name is Culbert for the Governor. That is another story because during the time Karl was in Alaska he would write and mention junior, and I would write back and say it was another girl, and in our minds the name was going to be altogether different. If it was a girl it was going to be Karla Sue, and if it was a boy it was going to be Karl and Sen in memory of Sen Katayama who was one of the outstanding Japanese men of his time who had died in 1933 in Moscow. If anyone wants to know about Sen Katayama they can read Karl's pamphlet on the Heritage of Sen Katayama which he wrote last year. But that is what we talked about.

On the way to the hospital with Frances Foster driving us, he suddenly said to me, "I want our son to be named Thomas Culbert." I said, "Oh, what are you talking about? It's another girl." Frances was just laughing because we were arguing back and forth. And for four days I didn't name the baby. They would come and ask me about the name, but I held off because I thought that Karl was in the emotional impact of what was happening - Tom being free, and marching up Market Street with Tom with his union banner, and standing there with the banner in the background - that this sort of was a reaction. But he said, no, he had thought it over and that's what he wanted. I felt that was a very appropriate name for the day. So that's what we named him - Thomas Culbert. In fact Herb Caen picked up the fact and it appeared in a Herb Caen column of the day that we had named our son Culbert Olsen. We have pictures of both the Governor and Tom Mooney with greetings to us autographed by them. The last picture taken of Tom Mooney alive was taken with our son at St. Luke's Hospital. This was in November of 1941. We wanted to send little snapshots to our friends of Tommy and Mooney. So we went to the hospital. He was here at St. Luke's. We had

Yon: pictures taken. Mooney was on his dying bed, although it didn't come until the following March. We had that momento among our files - the last picture taken of Tom Mooney alive.

Ken: After Tom was born, did you maintain your activities?

Yon: As much as possible. In fact, going into the hospital, I had bail money with me. There was going to be a demonstration. I have forgotten whether it was another picket line down at the docks against scrap, or what.

Ken: I forgot - what date was he born?

Yon: January 10th, 1939. That's three days after Mooney was free.

Ken: So then you went back to being active again?

Yon: Yes. In fact I took Tommie on a couple of picket lines. I ran for office for the Board of Supervisors, which was non partisan, but I was endorsed by the Party [Communist Party]. I spoke before many church groups and organizations, including the League of Women Voters, asking for support of my platform.

Ken: How many votes did you get?

Yon: I don't remember off hand - what was it? About 14,000?

Ken: I remember you saying you got more votes than Oleta (Oleta O'Connor Yates).

Yon: What was running for a different office. Of course, even in those days the fight was for child care centers, and so forth. There were quite a number of radio speeches in the course of the campaign. And a lot of questions as to where I am and what I am for, and so on.

Ken: Did the arrests simmer down after a while, or were there just as many? Was there a different quality in your type of work?

Yon: With the CIO coming into being for a while it took on attacks against the Cannery and Agricultural Workers Union. There was a 1936 strike of the waterfront of the longshoremen trying to maintain their hiring hall which they had won after that hard fought battle in 1934. But the arrests weren't that intense. There were pockets of arrests. As I pointed out, in 1936, when the CIO came into being, there was the Salinas thing, although it was AFL

Yon: at the time. But the CIO was on the rise. And some of these unions started having defense committees of their own. Like the Harry Bridges defense had their own committee. It's true that the Mooney Committee had come into being years before there was an ILD. Yet there was this close working with the ILD.

The ILD helped organize a world tour of Mother Mooney and Ada Wright, one of the Scottsboro mothers - so there was a close alliance with different defense groups. There was the King-Ramsay-Connor Committee which the Marine Firemen's Union set up, but the ILD worked with them. There were just pockets. There weren't the mass round ups there had been in the early thirties.

Ken: I want to ask a question now because I asked before about the approach in the movement (the left wing movement) toward women. What was the approach of some of the people with whom you were in contact that were not in the left wing movement, like Governor Merriam, who had you thrown against the wall? Like judges? Did they specifically say anything about you as a woman? Do you remember anything?

Yon: There were innuendos about the home, in the kitchen - "You don't belong here." Of course you have to remember that Roosevelt had a woman in the Department of Labor (Frances Perkins) with whom I had a number of meetings around immigration cases when she was here on the West Coast. If the need was there to go into a judge's chambers, or go in to the Superior Court, or meet with government officials, I didn't ever hesitate and say, "Oh, no, it should be a man."

Ken: The point is, did they treat you differently because you were a woman?

Yon: Well, Merriam was a reactionary type and remained one until his dying day. It made no difference whether it was a woman who got her head split, or a man. If there were about to be heads split, it would happen to anybody who was pro labor because to him anybody who was pro labor deserved to have their heads split regardless of sex. As far as the police, they would often say, "What in the heck are you doing here? Why aren't you home with your kids?" Actually it made no difference to the police, who were agents of the employers. To this day a good many of the police remain that way. That is their role - to protect big business rather than protect everybody's rights. So, I was a person. I wasn't a woman. I was someone there who was their enemy. I was the enemy of their boss. Not that I was part of those

Yon: who were helping pay their salary because we were paying taxes. That made no difference to them. I exemplified the enemy, and my associated, whether male or female, were looked upon as the enemy. So it made no difference to them. They did not treat us gentler. If they had to throw us into solitary, they did. If they had to beat us, they beat us. They didn't stop from using their brass knuckles against my breast - a very sore spot to hit. That didn't stop them because I was a woman. I exemplified the enemy to them, or what they felt was the enemy.

As far as the police - here is an example. They said, "Here comes the red angel" when I came in to place bail. Of course there was a sneer in their voice when they said it. In Salinas they labeled me the Tiger Woman. Girl.

Ken: Why?

Yon: Evidently because I had walked (all four feet eleven inches of me) into the courthouse and, surrounded by these six footers, wanted to know where I could place bail. One man, who was on duty, let out such a shriek - "Here's Elaine Black," and they all came out with their shotguns. And I stood there and told them what I wanted. I didn't resent that. If a tiger is one who stalks his prey, I was stalking the enemy to try and free those who had been unjustly imprisoned.

Ken: Now, there is still some period before the war. Can you go into that a little bit?

Yon: There were always a number of women involved in different positions. Then, after the election, I still continued activities - not on a daily basis. I was no longer in the office as such, although I remained the Pacific Coast Vice President of the ILD. I did not go back to any conventions - instead always helping to raise funds to send someone else so that we could be represented. And I participated in the different cases.

I believe it was in 1938 that the alien registration came into being. There was a swoop down on a lot of aliens again, and some of them wanted to know their rights. Others citizenship was being held up. So there was a lot of activity in that field around providing advice to those who might be aliens to maintain their status here in the United States because a good many of them faced not only hardship, but even death if they were to be sent back to Greece, to Spain, to Japan. So there was this struggle going on too in

Yon: the immigration field - mass meetings being held to preserve rights.

Then, in 1940, there were remnants of cases appealed and people coming out on parole-- helping them to get jobs. These were labor prisoners - labor and political prisoners.

I mentioned that Louise Todd, for instance, was Tom's godmother. She had been convicted on a charge of perjury which dealt with a campaign to get the Communist Party on the ballot, and had done time in Tehachaple as a political prisoner because her crime was a political crime. The Communist Party did get on the ballot, but she served two and a half years, I believe it was, on the charge of perjury.

We had to see that those who needed jobs got them. Sometimes the job they had been paroled to didn't turn out, but we got them other work so they wouldn't be imprisoned on parole violation. There were a number who had been paroled whose outright freedom we didn't win. They did time in prison and had records.

There was the continual raising of funds for families of political and labor prisoners. That particular struggle went on. The ILD was still a viable force.

There were other defense committees coming into being in different parts of the country as the unions grew in membership. There was an uprise in union membership in that period. They were building their own defense funds in case their union was attacked, rather than a general fund. The ILD remained an organization, and I remained a member, even after the war started. But in 1940 and 1941 it was primarily just individual cases as they came up, and commemorative affairs like the Paris Commune, which was a day the ILD would always honor (March 18th) when we had an affair to raise money for the families of political prisoners. There were days of solidarity. In the 1940's it was still trying to help the Chinese war relief and sending relief. Then, of course, in the 1941's there were remnants of cases going on. There weren't quite so many in California any more. Things had tempered down in California. Of course the horrendous cases and violations of civil rights of the Negroes (as we said, in the 1940's we didn't say Black then) was a constant battle

Yon: in which the ILD was involved to try and do away with the racists - with the jails being filled with young men and women on sundry crimes which they never committed. Their only crime being the color of their skin.

Then these activities continued, more or less for benefits and mass meetings - arranging mass meetings if people would come. If there was a case in Washington, someone would come and speak here, and there was a mass meeting arranged to hear people. Dances - that was a way of raising funds. Name bands would be hired. That's something that doesn't go on too much now. We, in California, had pockets of cases. Whether it would be in Lodi all at once, or whether it would be down in Tulare, or would be up in the gold fields, there were these pockets of activities that continued.

Now in the courts, in 1941, there were still some of the same activities. I would do some speaking. If there were affairs where they needed my special talents, if I had any, I would go and be present. But I didn't do as much traveling because Tommy turned out to be asthmatic, allergic from the time he was five weeks old. So he had to have a lot of special care and I couldn't go away for too long. Karl was still a permit man on the waterfront. He was not registered by the shipowners.

Then Karl was accepted as a full member of Local 10, although the shipowners did not give him registration. But he was allowed to work on the waterfront. He was still active in the Alaska Cannery Workers Union, but he did not go to Alaska any more after 1938. I was also active in the Auxiliaries in the different steps that they took.

Then, in November of 1941, we were in the hospital of St. Luke's taking pictures of Tom Mooney. The reason I bring that out is our project that year, our Xmas cards for December 1941, were Chinese War Relief cards that we had bought, and we had one hundred of these little snaps of Tom Mooney and Tommy for one hundred of our special friends - the cards with the snaps. A couple of hundred others were just going to get the Chinese war relief cards. And, lo and behold, came the attack on Pearl Harbor. Karl and I looked at each other and wondered, what is it going to mean for people like us? What is it going to be? What is the fate that awaits us from here on in? Karl immediately went down to Japantown to gather reactions of what went on and what people were saying. Of course reporters were all around Japantown.

December 8th there was a knock on our door

Yon: and three men identified themselves as FBI agents. They asked if this was the residence of Karl Yoneda, and I said yes. Since we were at war with the fascist axis I was going to cooperate with the FBI. I didn't tell them to come back some other time, or meet me in my attorney's office as I would have normally. And they came on up, and they were looking for Karl. I said he was working on the waterfront, and they didn't believe me. They searched the house and they found the stack (in fact it was laying on the writing desk) of Chinese war relief cards and these little pictures. One of them said, "Oh, what a perfect dodge, having Chinese war relief cards in a Japanese home." I said, "First of all, this is the home of Karl Yoneda who has a history of being anti-militarist, anti what Japan was doing to China long before - when you were cooperating with what Japan was doing in China. You must have the wrong residence. You've got your papers mixed up." They said, "We are here looking for Karl Yoneda. Where is he?" I again said, "On the waterfront." They made me call the hiring hall, and I cooperated. I told them he was down at the dock, and the number of the dock he was at. They had me call to ascertain. And when I started to tell the dispatcher that there are some men here they put their hand over the mouthpiece and shook their head. I said, "There is someone here who is very anxious to get hold of Karl. Isn't he at this and this dock?" And he was in what is known as Copenhagen Hansen's gang. The waterfront language is very colorful and you hear people talk that they are in a gang, and you wonder what it is. It is a group on the dock or in the hold of a ship. I said, "He is in Copenhagen Hansen's gang?" They said, yes, that is so. That's the name of his gang boss. So, in those days they used to broadcast over the radio. One radio station would say, "Copenhagen Hansen's gang meet under the bridge." And if you really weren't hep to what was going on it could really scare you. But that's what it was.

I found out afterwards the FBI men went down to the dock, pulled him off the dock, and brought him up to Silver Avenue where they had about thirty four other men, most of them aliens, a few of them American born. Karl was American born. They certainly had a dossier on him that he was anti-fascist, anti-militarist Japan. But he also had a record of being a union organizer, being a Communist, and therefore they were going to take him away. They didn't tell me why they were looking

Yon: for him. In fact, I said, "If you are looking for Karl Yoneda, you are wasting your time. Why aren't you looking for the man who just moved in downstairs a month ago? I don't even know his name, but he was a big business man. He suddenly disappeared two days ago." He probably caught the last boat back to Japan. But they weren't looking for him. So I didn't know what they had done with Karl. I found out afterwards that they came down to the dock and pulled him off. They had their sawed off machine guns.

I also found out from my neighbors that all the roofs around (we lived on Endicott Park that time, which is a street that is no longer in existence, in back of Girls Hi, between Steiner and the Girls Hi, and between Geary and O'Farrell. It is now part of the park there in that section) were surrounded by men with guns in case I started to run with Tommy.

Karl was kept forty eight hours and released. I threatened a writ of habeus corpus because what were they holding him for? And I had gotten in touch with George Andersen, one of the ILD attorneys, and he was ready to file a writ when they released Karl. They had no grounds to keep him as a potential dangerous enemy.

As soon as he was released he dispatched a telegram to Roosevelt offering his services. He said, "I am going to try to enlist in this man's army and fight the fascists wherever they are." he said he particularly wanted to go to the Pacific. The hearings were held here by the Tolan Committee. The only rational voice here was that of Lou Goldblatt of the then CIO Council of the California State CIO, who is now International Secretary Treasurer of the ILWU. But that's all recorded in the Tolan Committee hearings. And Karl, hearing that there was going to be "evacuation" and a camp built in Southern California, we decided that we would move down and I would go to live with my parents, Tommy and I, and Karl would volunteer for Manzanar while trying to enlist in the army. He was offering his services because he was bilingual; not that he knew anything military, having runaway from serving in the Imperial Japanese army.

We were making plans. We stored some of our things and some of the things we gave away. We were fortunate in that we had friends. We stored things with them. All but five boxes of books, I think, and documents, disappeared. That's why

Yon: things are so sketchy here. But others didn't have that particular recourse. Also we sold our car at a loss.

However, Tom Mooney died as we were preparing to leave, so we postponed our leaving San Francisco until after his funeral. And Tommy, Joyce, Karl and I went to the funeral. Then we left the same night to go to Los Angeles where Karl left on March 23rd for Manzanar.

I was starting to look for war work when, lo and behold, the next week there was an announcement that all those whose breadwinners were in Manzanar would have to clear out of military area No. 1 by noon of April 2nd. In trying to find out whether it meant Tommy, who was half Japanese, and whose father was in Manzanar as a volunteer, I was told that anyone who was one sixteenth blood on the father's side - this is what counted by the Geneva Covenants which we [the U.S.] never signed. They were going to go by the Geneva Covenants, but I needn't go. I insisted I wasn't going to abandon our three year and two month old. If that's where he's going to go, I was going to go too. So, I spent eight and a half months in Manzanar. That is something else.

Ken: That has been recorded by Fullerton.

Can I ask a question now - there were so many women in the unions and in the trade union movement, and in the left wing movement, there are two particularly about who I would like to hear - what your opinions are and what you remember about them. One is Anita Whitney and the other is Beatrice Kinhead. Both of them you worked with, and both of them are dead now.

Memories of Anita Whitney

Yon: Anita Whitney I first met to recognize her in 1933 when I came up to San Francisco. Although no doubt she was present at the Mooney rally that I attended in San Francisco in 1931 and again in 1932, I just knew her casually. But I got to know her from 1933 on. A woman who was a gentle person, who saw the need of bettering the conditions of workers. In her early years she was an outstanding suffragette, and then was one of the first women to be tried under the Criminal Syndicalism Act. But these were all things that I found out afterwards. She was a founding member of the Communist Party after years in the Socialist Party. And she remained true, although she wasn't

Yon: of the workingclass, to the principles of the workers, who were after all the majority. They were the ones who had the most needs, and their needs had to be provided for. If there were less profit for the employers, let there be less profit.

Ken: Was she a brilliant woman?

Yon: Very, and well read, who in her early years had been a social worker. She came from a well-bred family, with an uncle in the Supreme Court of the United States, and another in high office, and with ample money - so called "upper class" if you want to call it that. Yet she felt that her being should be devoted not to being a debutant or something, but to better the conditions of people all around so that there would be no need.

Ken: Do you remember any times you went places with her, or did things with her?

Yon: Well, the Criminal Syndicalism Case. She had a car and drove. I didn't have a car, and I didn't drive. So often, going to meetings, she would be my "chauffeur." I don't know how they failed to put down that I also ran away from places with a woman chauffeur. So there were quite a number of meetings and rallies where, if there was going to be a Communist Party spokesperson, and she was the person, and me for the ILD, we would go together. There were so many rallies and meetings, many campaigns - the campaign to get the Party on the ballot, the fight against fascism, and so on.

Yes, she was on the picket line, I was on the picket line. We would get arrested together.

Very often Anita, having the resources she had, put up her property for bail. So that entailed going into court with her and getting the property bonds, and getting people out on bail. She was very, very free that way. There were no ands, if, or buts. If a worker had a high bond and we were going to post property, and we were able to find a second property owner, because that was the requirement, she was there.

Ken: Did she ever speak in court or participate in defense in her own behalf?

Yon: I don't recall her defending herself, but she was a defendant. And that example I gave, for instance, about the address - since I refused to give an address, she and two other persons also refused to give an address. But then, when we had

Yon: sort of a meeting with an attorney it was decided that I would be the only one who wouldn't - who could maintain that I would not give it under these conditions. She took the stand and would testify. She was a defendant. She did not sit quietly. She participated in her defense by testifying during the course of the trial.

She had a very soft voice, not like mine. She was certainly very knowledgeable. When Mother Bloor would come to town - to hear the two of them speak was really a treat. They were really such opposites. Mother Bloor was from the womb of the workingclass - the so called rough side of the railroad tracks. Their thoughts and actions were so interwoven - to better the conditions of the workers.

Ken: Do you know whatkind of a private life she had - or did she have any?

Yon: I don't believe she had. It seems that perhaps in the early part of the century there may have been a love affair, but she very seldom spoke about herself. She would speak in general, like "When I went to this settlement house", or "There were people all around me in the tenement houses living like this." Her blood would boil. Couldn't she overturn it and make it better overnight? But she said it wasn't that way. You couldn't do anything overnight. It took years of struggle to bring about certain reforms like the laws that were protective for women and children which are now being done away with under the so-called Equal Rights Act. Sure they want equality, so they take away what is good and give us equality with what is rotten. They were protective laws. Why weren't they extended to the men? But those were part of the struggle that Anita was involved in in 1913 when the Industrial Welfare Commission first came into being. She was part of that struggle to get those protective rights for women and minors. And I think she is turning over in her grave to see how it is prostituted now under equal rights.

Ken: Did you ever have intimate discussions with her?

Yon: Not about her personal life. Just about certain activities. Her birthday fell about the same time as Karl's. There was a long period of years when we were living in Sonoma County where every July we had great big bashes where we had one hundred and fifty to two hundred people come

Yon: in to celebrate Karl's and Anita's birthdays. So she would be our guest during that period. Whenever we were in San Francisco we would visit her. When we came out of the concentration camp (and Karl was in another State with the U.S. Military Intelligence) once a week Tommy and I would be her guests. I was commuting with Tommy. It was sort of hectic, so that our meals weren't very regular. So at least once a week we had a real good dinner, and it would be at her home.

Ken: Did she cook?

Yon: As far as I can remember. Yes she did. I don't ever recall seeing any servants or domestic help in her place. She maintained her apartment there on Macondray Lane just beautifully. Had this marvelous view. To this day our son remembers the telescope she used to have that faced the bay. He would look and say, "I wonder if my daddy is on that ship."

Ken: How was she with children?

Yon: She was very gentle; and helped raise, I understand, some grand nephews. She never had any children of her own. She never married, and she helped with the raising of a nephew who, particularly in the later years, lived with her.

Ken: I don't suppose you can categorize anybody like Anita Whitney. How would you sum her up?

Yon: Well, I would sum her up as a woman of her era in the fight for decent wages and hours. And, at the turn of the century, they were horrendous. We know that the work hours were twelve hours a day and longer. The pay was a few pennies a day. She was one of the pioneers in that struggle and was, like many of the other women in the United States who were not workers themselves yet put themselves in the position of what it meant to be a worker in these United States in those days. Then she extended her view to take in the whole world and fight against wrong anywhere in the world.

Ken: She must have been an amazing woman.

Yon: She was an amazing woman.

Ken: I want to ask you one more question. You were in jail with her, weren't you?

Yon: Well, this was just when we were arrested, and then we were bailed out. She was brought in during the hunger strike, but she was there one day and

Yon: then bailed out. She was arrested and did a few days in the Louise Todd case, but in her case she was given a sentence in the County Jail for less than a year. Louise was given one to fourteen on perjury. Her nephew paid the fine against her wishes, so that she was released.

Ken: Jail is a funny set up. You are either isolated, or you talk to the people you are in jail with. Do you remember, in any way, her association with the other women?

Yon: She had a different cell, when she was brought in, than mine. I was in a cell with Margaret while she was brought in and immediately bailed out. Her case was different than mine except that one arrest at the Nazi Bund. Then it was the same arrest and the same case, and we were both bailed out. But in 1934, when I was in the longest period, she was just brought in and then bailed out. Then I remained in. She what happened in the interim I don't know.

Ken: I was just wondering how other people besides her left wing friends reacted to her, or how she got along with them.

Yon: Her family was quite distressed each time she was in the so-called limelight, but she disregarded that. She said it was her life and that was what she was going to do. I believe when her nephew came to live with her it was understood she was not going to stop her activities, and she continued with them as long as she remained able to. She was in her nineties when she died, and was a beautiful woman. She was one of the prettiest women - and always so neat about herself, and clean cut. It's hard to describe her because to me she is just a fabulous person that I was very happy to have known and worked with.

In a good many cases when we had to outline politics and procedures where communists were involved in cases we counseled with the District Committee of the Communist Party on how to conduct the case. She, being on the District Committee, always had very good suggestions and never shirked many tasks that might be put to her. She was known to go out and give out leaflets which is a job many of us tried to slough off with a "Oh no, I've got to be in court", or "I have to do this and that." But she - never.

Ken: Did she do door to door work?

Yon: I believe during campaigns that she did.

Ken: And public speaking?

Yon: Yes. She did a lot of public speaking

Ken: On Beatrice Kinhead.

Yon: Beatrice Kinhead was in (I've forgotten the name of the organization). She was also in the International Labor Defense. But in the thirties another organization came into being that was more liberal than the American Civil Liberties Union, and she joined that. It also participated in the Free the Scottsboro Boys (I should say the Scottsboro Nine, but in those years we weren't so sensitive to the language) and the Kentucky Miners.

Beatrice lived down the Peninsula. We would arrange benefits for the different cases that were taking place, and I would go down there as a guest and talk on the issue of the day, whether it was the Salinas strikers, or whether it was the Nevada City gold strike or whether it was the cases on the waterfront, or what have you.

Ken: When you knew her, was her family already raised? She had three or four boys, I think.

Yon: I know that they were much older than my daughter when I first knew her. Then they moved to San Francisco and then back to the Peninsula. But I first knew her as a woman down the Peninsula who was a liberal who was interested in civil rights cases. That was my introduction to her. It was around those activities.

Ken: You never knew her as well as you knew Anita?

Yon: No.

Ken: I mean, you didn't socialize with her?

Yon: No, and her main activity at that time was mainly ACLU type. Some of the other women were interested in different cases. Mrs. Salz (who was just honored as one of the most distinguished ten) was also interested and on specific occasions would throw her mansion open for benefits or teas. So there was this mixture of women and men I associated with and did things with on specific cases.

Ken: Can you characterize Beatrice and tell me what you thought of her?

Yon: She impressed me as being a woman - that if

Yon: she had made up her mind that this was the course she was going to take, regardless of what anyone else might say like "Oh, this isn't for a woman to do - you shouldn't do this. It is unladylike" - that if that was what she was going to do. She was determined. She saw the need rather than to give in to any criticism. She never gave a thought to her position first.

Ken: Did I see a picture of you and Anita Whitney and Beatrice Kinkaid together?

Yon: I don't have it, but there were so many pictures of me with different people, including James Cagney who came up for an art exhibit that the ILD had for the Scottsboro Nine. So pictures may be floating around in somebody's home. I don't know.

Ken: Are there any other women you had contact with?

Yon: Louise Todd, who was District Secretary of the Communist Party for Northern California. And there were quite a number of women. Minnie Carson was one. She was in the needle trades and then became the District Secretary of the International Labor Defense.

Ken: Did you want to talk about Ida Rothstein?

Yon: Ida Rothstein, sometimes known as Ida Roth, was a woman who never went to school in the United States, but was a very forceful speaker - forthright. I first met her in 1930 in the ILD in Southern California. When I went to work she was the District Organizer there. Then, when I came up to Northern California, she came up shortly thereafter and worked in the Communist Party as the Fillmore Section Organizer. She remained active in the ILD. Helped organize unions, agricultural unions and needle trades unions. She was a very active and forceful woman who participated in all the unemployed marches and demonstrations and a woman who dedicated her life for the betterment of mankind. Her English writing left a lot to be desired. But her spoken words! Each word I thought was a pearl because it was what had to be said when it had to be said.

Ken: She was foreign born, wasn't she, and they never tried to deport her?

Yon: There was an attempt. She came from Russia. To this day they have no exchange of prisoners.

Yon: If any exchange occurs, like spies, Russia was sent hers and they sent captured American spies back. That is a separate, individual, diplomatic fight. But there is no exchange of so-called Nationals, regardless of what crime one might be accused of. So we have men and women of Russian extraction, or born in Russia and brought here as infants, who to this day aren't, or are just becoming citizens, because their activities were held against them. There was no exchange. Some of them were arrested, and bail put up, and stayed up on them for a long time. There may have been attempts in the twenties, because she was active from the time the party was organized. She had a long history.

Ken: Did she ever get married?

Yon: Yes, she was married?

Ken: Any children?

Yon: No children. She separated from her husband who was also a Communist. He stayed back East and she came here. If there were any other men in her life, I am not aware of them. She was a very dedicated person. She too was arrested many times, and harrassed, but she kept right on. She became very active in the fifties during the McCarthy period and the Smith Act, in fighting that, and in the Civil Rights Congress. She was hit by a hit runner and killed. The hit runner was never apprehended. That was in the mid fifties. That snapped her life out. She still had some years she could have given to the movement.

Ken: Did she work as a needle trades worker?

Yon: She worked as a needle trades worker. That was her background. But when she was back East she had gone down to the mine fields and helped organize miners like Mother Bloor had done, and before Mother Bloor, Mother Jones. So there is a long history of struggle there too. Her background was a garment worker.

Ken: She is just one of the unsung millions, I guess.

Yon: Yes, she is. Actually I don't know too much about her early years. I met her in Los Angeles - the viable, forceful person that she was. Although I had a heck of a time reading and typing leaflets that she would write, whatever she said was right. She did not go to school in this country, so she actually was self taught. It was a wonder that she was able to do and speak as well as she did, and get

Yon: her point across, which she did. There again, she was arrested a good many times, but not actually at the same time that I was.

Ken: You knew Oleta O'Connor Yates pretty well?

Yon: Yes. And Oleta was another woman who was pretty forceful. She had more education in the American School System than I had. She was a scholar, and continued studying. But I quit in my senior year, and that was it. She, too, was a very forceful speaker and was one of the leaders of the Communist Party in this area. I have forgotten when she died @ whether I was still in camp, or after I came back. Oh, it was after we came back. Of course we moved away to Sonoma County for thirteen years, so in that period I didn't see too much of her, and that's when she died.

Ken: Unless you know someone pretty personally, I guess you can't tell too much, but you did know her pretty personally?

Yon: Yes, I knew her pretty personally, and some of her personal involvements I couldn't understand.

Ken: But she did have a personal life?

Yon: Yes, and some of it was public, and some of it wasn't. For instance, I've often wondered why she took up with a certain man. That, as I say, was her business.

Ken: I don't know how she had time as she was such an active person.

Yon: Well, these were men in the labor movement. Perhaps a lot of it revolved around their mutual togetherness. I certainly couldn't have done the things I did if I didn't have an understanding person like Karl. He was very active in his own field; but didn't say that was the only thing we were going to be active in, and the rest is for you. Our activities weren't often the same although the end results, we hoped, would be the same. His was primarily among the Japanese language groups, which language I have never mastered in almost forty three years.

I have accumulated honorary memberships in such organizations as the Cigar Makers Union because of the help I gave them in their strike in the thirties; the Cleaners and Dyers Union, both of them American Federation of Labor Unions. I acquired honorary membership in these unions, which were primarily men. Yet they bestowed, even in those days, honorary membership

Yon: in their locals upon me.

Ken: Are you an honorary member of the ILWU?

Yon: No, I am not an honorary member of the ILWU. I am a member of the ILWU Auxiliary. I happen to be the president of the Auxiliary here in San Francisco, and I am very active in the Federated Auxiliaries. In fact, they sent me as a delegate to the World Peace Congress in 1973 in Moscow. All the auxiliaries, not just the San Francisco auxiliary.

Ken: Well, I guess that's enough now.

Yon: Yes, I think so.

Interview with Elaine Black Yoneda - Second Series

Date of Interview: March 23, 1977

367 Elsie Street

San Francisco, Calif.

Interviewer: Lucy Kendall

Transcriber: Lucy Kendall

Begin: Tape One - Page One

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Ken: Today is Wednesday, March 23rd, 1977, and this is an interview with Elaine Yoneda which is a follow up of interview taken last year about this time. Elaine what we are trying to do is to patch up the interview I did with you last year because there are a lot of questions I didn't ask and a lot of answers I didn't get from you then. So with our mutual agreement we are going to go on to another series of interviews.

Family life

The first thing is I want to know more about your life when you were young. First, where were you born?

Yon: At Home, and at that time it was Avenue D and East 12th Street in the tenement area of New York, and it was a home delivery. I don't have the information of who, even on my birth certificate.

Ken: Was it a nurse?

Yon: I don't know. I don't think it was a doctor. It may have been just a midwife.

Ken: What kind of a neighborhood was it that you lived in?

Yon: At that time I understand it was a tenement and in that area along the East River there is a cooperative housing there that the needle trades workers put up some years afterwards. I visited there in 1968 for the first time.

Ken: What was your home like?

Yon: At that time you understand my dad was a barber and he was trying to work his way up. When I was nine months old, I was told afterwards, we moved to Pennsylvania where he tried working in the mines and that was too heavy for him. So we came back to New York and ^{when I was two} they moved to Waterbury Connecticut where he worked in a barber shop

Yon: as well as in the Big Ben factory, a clock factory.

Ken: Then when did you come back to New York?

Yon: I came back to New York. I really don't know the exact date. I don't know whether it was 1911 or whether it was 1910. I really don't know, but in 1911 I know we were living in Manhattan. And from there, towards the end of 1911, my brother who was then two and a half (he was born in February in Waterbury, Connecticut), and we went to Russia which was still under the Czar's rule, of course, ^{with our mother.} She had promised she would come back some day to her parents.

Ken: Yes. we covered that. What was your house like? How many rooms were there. Did you have a private room?

Yon: No. In fact, when I was a little older I shared a room with my parents.

Ken: Where did your brother sleep?

Yon: He had a small crib. In fact for a while there I remember sleeping in the same bed with them. My brother's crib was there, so it must have been a very small tenement apartment.

Ken: Was it upstairs?

Yon: It was upstairs because I remember going up flights of stairs. As I indicated before, our trip to Russia was to have been of two years' duration, but it only lasted nine months.

Ken: You didn't tell me that. Why did it only last nine months?

Visiting Russia

Yon: Well I guess even then I was considered the princess of the house. My grandmother and grandfather, that is my maternal grandmother and grandfather (my paternal grandparents were in this country) and I found my grandmother's cellar stacked with all sorts of jams and things, and I wanted jam when I wanted it and not just on holidays. My mother would have words with her mother and say, you know, "She wants some, why don't you bring up a jar?" And one thing led to another. I refused to speak English or read the English first reader that my mother had brought along with her. I said, "As long as I am here I am going to speak yiddish."

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Yon: and learn Russian. In fact my great uncl^e gave me a name "Whoz is Dos" which means "what is this" because everything I touched I wanted to know what it was. I wouldn't turn to my mother and say "what is this?" I would say "Whoz is Dos?" So I had ~~a~~ nickname for the nine months we were there, "Who^z is Dos."

Ken: What do you remember about your grandmother and grandfather?

Yon: They were a very attractive couple. They had a small farm in the village. The only industry outside of farming in that area were those who were dressmakers and a match factory where my mother and father had worked from the time they were eight and ten years old before they left. I remember getting on the wagon my grandfather had and sitting on some legs he was carrying to the match factory, and riding in the back with my brother to the match factory. It was near a river, and I remember groups of women going together and swimming nude, washing in the river. Then there were groups of men and my brother would go with them in another area to wash and bathe in the river. I remember the outhouse. They had no running water in the house at that time. But from the standards of that time it was middle class for a Jewish family because there was a very commodi^ous home. I remember the oven that they had in the kitchen. It was a great big oven and my grandmother did a lot of baking and my mother would help her. And on top of the oven was a place to sleep. And I remember for one of the holidays my aunt - who lived quite a distance from the home place - came with her eight children, my cousins. And one of them was my age. Some were older and some were younger. One of the things I remember is that we were given halavah to eat with bread. The one who finished the bread with the piece of halavah would get ^{other} a piece of halavah without the bread. That is a Turkish sweet that to this day they sell ~~it~~ around here, and it is very tasty and very fattening. So as many of us as could, we would get in under the table and gobble the bread as quick as we could. Teh of us would get in under the table and see

- Yon: who could finish first, the children who were there, the eight cousins and my brother and I. Because we were really gobbling it ^{for} because we wanted to make sure there would be enough halavah for us.
- Ken: Why did they do this?
- Yon: Well, it was a treat. They didn't always have it. I don't recall seeing any store in the village where they had it, so my grandfather probably had to go into the town that was far away with his horses and bring back the extra groceries and things, and he would bring back the amount of halavah, I suppose, which they could afford which would last a few days, but we wanted to make sure the first one out would get the extra piece of halavah because there might not be enough to go around. It was sort of a see who could come out first.
- Ken: Did your grandparents ever try to teach you anything about their morals?
- Yon: No, my grandmother and my aunt would light the candles Friday night and my mother would not participate because she refused when she was twelve years old to do any of that. She would not go in for helping with the religious end of the family chores.
- Ken: Why did she refuse?
- Yon: She and my father both because atheists because they both felt that if there really was a god in heaven why did he allow such disease, ^{starvation} and poor people starving and the ^{just} ^{meat of} ~~Czar mistreating~~ people, and some having so much and others having nothing, and the plundering, and the killing when the pogroms came. If there was a god, if it was a Jewish god or if it was just an overall god why did he allow it. So they had nothing to do with organized religion ^{for the rest of} ~~all~~ their lives. Mother died when she was 86 and dad when he was 92, and they remained of that belief that there wasn't a god. ^{They felt life was} ~~That we had to do it~~ here, ^{and fight for it.} ~~and fight for it.~~ ^{to better it was here on earth and not in} ~~paradise~~
- Ken: In the first place, while you were there for the nine months did you absorb anything from your grandparents in the way of learning.

- Y.= At five years it was a little too difficult to absorb. I would see that my mother's oldest sister and my grandmother when it came towards sundown on Friday that everything stopped and they lit the candles and they didn't touch any of the cooking material or do anything because it was the Sabbath. But mother went on with her ways and they respected her and she respected them. They did make a remark, "well, you haven't changed." And ^{she} said, "I don't intend to change." And so that's all I remember, ~~about~~ and I don't recall going to synagogue with my grandparents although they went and my aunt went and her children went. But I don't recall ever going to the synagogue with them. They walked, ~~they~~ did not ride.
- K. Did you only stay nine months because-
- Y. Well, there were all those differences and I, as I say, I did not want to converse or read anything ~~that we~~ in English and my mother was worried that I would forget what little I did know because I hadn't been to an organized school yet. And these differences were about any kind of a holiday. And if I wanted jam on my bread I wanted it. And the different mores I guess. Perhaps there were rumblings that my mother was more aware of war to come because it was on the verge of World War I. So we came back in 1912.
- K. I want to ask one more question. How happen your father would allow your mother and your brother and you to go away for two years.
- Y. He had just started a barber shop and they felt it would be a little easier on the exchequer because what little funds he had been able to save were sunk into this small barber shop and it was in Brooklyn and he and the brother in-law were starting it (his sister's husband who was also a barber) from Springfield, Mass - started the barber shop. And they figured out it would be easier to go then when we were small since my mother had taken this vow, and even though she didn't believe in anything a vow to her was sort of sacred, and she said she was going to come back and show them where she had flown because her father had run after the train yelling, "My little bird, where are you

- Y. flying to" when she left for the United States ^{after} when my father sent for her. So that she said, "I'll show you some day where I'm flying to and what I am doing." The opportunity arise too that there was a woman with children the same age we were, my brother and I, who had bought a round trip ticket and had her passport, and her size and everything was sort of similar to my mother's, ~~because~~ my mother could not return to ~~the~~ Czarist Russia because she had ~~been~~ married to someone who ran away. You see my dad ran away from the Czar's army when he was drafted so that he was a wanted man and therefore under the name of ~~Cushman~~ she couldn't come back. So she went on a false passport. In fact I had to learn a different name and answer to it. I don't recall what it was now. It was ~~a~~ quite common practice at the turn of the century or early in the century where aliens or immigrants would use one another's ship's pass to get aboard, and it sold for very little. This woman decided she wasn't going to go back to Russia. ~~I don't know which part of her family she came with her two children.~~ It is an unknown quantity ~~of~~ how my parents got to know them I don't know, but ~~back~~ we went on what would be considered phony passports. My brother was two and a half and I was five. So we had to answer to those names at that time and they were the names we used when we had to do anything official. I remember when we landed in Liverpool and had to take a small boat to what turned out to be Hamburg. ~~I didn't know.~~ And everyone on this small boat was just as sick as could be except my mother and I. We were nursing all the others. It was a really horrendous thing. I have never been seasick to this day. But others all around, ~~in~~ four and five tier bunks, one on top of the other in this so called passenger tug or whatever it was that carried this human freight.
- K. Let me ask a question here. Were you the spoiled one in the family between you and your brother, or was he also spoiled?
- Y. My brother was spoiled by my mother and I was spoiled by my father. I was dad's girl and Al was mother's boy and that caused conflicts later on.

- K. I just wondered, because usually in families from Europe the boy is the major person.
- Y. As I say, both my parents were mavericks of their time. They did not go by the so-called customary mores. They had their own. They were both members of the Socialist Party. I didn't know that. Dad was a member of the Barber's Union.
- K. That was the Socialist Party in Russia?
- Y. The Bund in Russia, in Russia before they left. He was active in that, and then when they came here they joined the Socialists.
- K. He came first and then sent for your mother?
- Y. Yes. He was here a year before he sent for mother.
- K. He came in 1904. Mother came in 1905.
- K. He sent the money?
- Y. Yes. He sent for her. Adjustment to U.S. story
- K. When they came over here did they have any problem adjusting? Did they tell you any stories about how they adjusted to life in -
- Y. No. They - of course there was the language difficulty. But there were large areas where just Jewish people were living, speaking either ^{Yiddish} Jewish or Russian, and they both could read and write in those languages so they were able ~~about~~ to find their way around. One of the stories mother ^{old us} tells - an uncle of hers had a butcher shop ~~but~~ she didn't know the name of the street or how to ^{get} start there, but next door to it was an umbrella shop, ^{with a large umbrella hanging outside} and she would always look for this umbrella to ~~go and~~ deliver the lunch to my uncle. When they moved ^{to} the butcher shop, ^{which} as I remember they had their living quarters in back. But this was before they ^{moved} ~~had that~~ and they were living ~~someplace else~~ ^{where}, and she would ~~come with lunch~~. One day she comes looking, and there is a butcher shop, but she doesn't look in there because there was no umbrella hanging ^{nearby} outside. And she wondered and wondered around and then went back to my aunt's, and they both went, but the umbrella shop ~~had moved out~~, ^{So} and there was no hanging umbrella. ~~So~~ She had to learn the names of the streets as well as looking for a symbol that would bring her to the ^{right} area.

- Y. She went to work as a model. Dad was working as a barber at the time.
- K. What language did you speak in the home, then?
- Y. ^{Yiddish} Jewish, primarily.
- K. All the time?
- Y. Most of the time. I never learned to read or write Yiddish, but I learned to speak it. And that is why when I went at five years old I was able to converse in Yiddish ^{with} to my grandparents and other relatives. I would not say one word of English while I was there.
- K. Did your mother want you to learn English?
- Y. She wanted me to. She had brought along books. Because we were going to stay two years she had brought along books like, "This is a Cat" and "This is a Dog" - you know the very first readers.
- K. She was going to learn to teach you?
- Y. She was going to learn at the same time. I did speak some English with my other friends but at home it was Yiddish. And my brother understood it too. Now in Waterbury ^{where} ~~where~~ we lived ^{there were} ~~with~~ other Jewish families in the neighborhood ^{but} most of the kids around were not and did not speak Jewish so I had to learn my English. And my brother was still an infant when we ^{moved} ~~came~~ back to Manhattan.
- K. I don't remember the date, but I think around this time there was a big strike against the Kosher butchers in New York; that they were overpricing.
- Y. I don't know because as far as Kosher butthhers that was no problem with us so that if there was I don't know. Mother, if she was still alive, might have known, but I don't ~~know~~. I just know some of the occurances around barber shops that happened. After we came back dad's barber shop was on the street between Bergen and Dean in the Brownsville area and there was another barber shop about ten doors down -
- K. Oh, you told me that.
- Y. Yes, the broken window. I remember that and asking about ^{it} ~~that~~, but I don't know about other strikes. I don't know about the shirtwaist strike in 1909. First of all we were in Connecticut. My parents probably ^{did} ~~got it~~ because they were readers of the Jewish labor press, at that time the Forward. The Forward was the Socialist paper. Afterwards it became rabid, ~~but at~~

Y. But at that time that was it.

K. Your grandparents- now on your father's side they lived here? And you talked about going to their house. They kept kosher. Outside of that, do you remember anything particularly about your grandparents. What relationship did you have with them?

Y. Oh, it was always very friendly and we would ^{go} ~~and~~ on dad's day off, it was Thursdays because the barbershop was open Saturday and Sundays, and they would get passes to the Jewish theatre and to burlesque shows because of the posters ^{in the shop} ~~up there~~, and dad would take the family to the shows. ~~And~~ We would usually go to Manhattan proper and visit his parents and then go to the show. We would go either by elevated train or street car ^{across the bridge} and then transfer ^{to another car} ~~and go~~. ~~And then~~ when the subways came into being we would take the subways. And I still have a hazy memory (I forgot on what avenue it was) of trolleys being pulled by horses. It is just a faint recollection of riding on some of those trolleys towards the area where my grandparents lived. ~~And they lived on East Thirteenth Street.~~ I believe it was on the third or fourth floor of ^a ~~this~~ tenement. And across the street was my mother's aunt and uncle, a sister of her mother, who had the butcher shop right across the street. So for years there was a sort of relationship of paternal and maternal relatives who lived across the street. And when we visited we visited ^{both families} ~~across~~. We didn't just go to grandma's house. We also stopped to see the others and occasionally when there were engagements or whatever within the family, why then we went there.

Dad's family had, most of them by that time, come over to the United States also. And his older sister was living in the Bronx. Two of them were living in California from about 1908 and 1909, in different areas - one in San Diego and the other ~~one~~ in L.A. And ^{another} ~~one~~ of his sisters was married to the barber, they were from Springfield, Mass. They had moved to Brooklyn. His brother was in Philadelphia. ~~But that~~ I don't ever recall visiting the Philadelphia ones. But the Springfield, Mass., when they moved back, I recall visiting them. ~~So~~ I think I mentioned I recall the May

- Y. Day parades that the Labor movement and the Socialist movement had. Actually what impact any of this had on me I don't really recall because -
- K. Did your father's parents respect their atheism as much as your mother's parents respected it?
- Y. Yes, they did. In fact I don't recall my dad's ^{just} oldest sister ^{or his younger ones} keeping a kosher home. Perhaps his older brother when they were in Philadelphia because his wife kept it, ~~but~~ ~~that~~ that wasn't any of his doings. But his oldest sister maintained the traditions, ~~you know~~.
- K. I see. Which of your grandparents did you like best?
- Y. I saw the others just for nine months and my father's parents lived with us for a time when we came to California. So there was a closer association. There ^{had also been the} ~~was~~ a weekly visit and with the others, it was cut off. If they sent letters my mother would read them to me and that's all. And they would ask how were the children and what were they doing now.
- K. What about your grandmother and grandfather on this side?
- Y. On this side, my grandmother had diabetes and was quite ill, and I think I indicated that she was the last one to eat. If she had made a great pot of chicken soup my grandfather got the top and the others got -
- K. No, you didn't.
- Y. What was left for her was whatever was left, you know. I never recall her sitting down at the table except when the whole family got together. She was always the last one at the table. And the story in the family was well that she had had a number of children, ~~And~~ she had fourteen children, and one of her prayers when she would light the candles was thanking god for allowing seven of them to live in spite of conditions of health as I remember. You know diabetes and cancer and things like that run throughout the family. Although they lived to a fairly old age they did have a lot of ailments that primarily was diabetes.
- K. Did you ever get a chance to spend any time along with your grandmother?
- Y. I don't ever recall being there alone. First of all it was going across the Brooklyn bridge. And then when we came to California I was not quite fourteen and they came

Y. with us on the same train, and then they lived with us for a while until they got their own place. And I think I indicated that they were given a certain corner that was clean and ^{newly} painted and their kosher things were put in there.

Relationship with parents

K. Let's get back to this then. What about your parents? you said you were your father's girl?

Y. Yes.

K. In What way?

Y. Well, he would have a tendency to take ~~my~~ someplace if the fest of the family couldn't go. One of the times I remember was going to Flatbush Avenue with him buying ham to make sandwiches to bring home. Al didn't ~~go~~, I was the one who went with him. Maybe it was because I was a faster walker. I don't know. Things like that. We would go to a show and I would sit next to dad and Al would sit next to mother and if he got restless he would go on mother's lap, not dad's lap. ~~So things like that.~~ And then in 1918 my mother took quite ill. There had been this siege of flu and it seemed that we had ^{escaped it -} but her ^{younger} sister who was by then in the United States, ~~her younger~~ ^(she ~~came here~~ much later) had the flu. She was pregnant and also had ~~one~~ ^a child. And they came and lived with us on Saratoga Avenue. It was on the third floor. It was what they called a front apartment because our windows faced the front on Saratoga rather than the side street. And she was living with us, and mother nursed her ~~with the flu~~, and her husband. ^{they during their bouts with flu} ~~but our side of the family -~~

Second side of tape

COUNTER #1
Y. Then she took very ill and it turned out to be what was called a miracle operation at that time. They found out that she had a ruptured ulcer, and they had to remove part of her stomach. That was in 1918, and so she was quite ill for a long time, and everything tasted sour to her. I remember trying to fix some prunes for her and I thought I would put in an awful lot of sugar, and I had because I couldn't taste it it was so sweet. (To this day I don't eat much cereal because I don't put ~~much~~ sugar on it.) But it was just like syrup, and she said I was trying to make

Y. her worse because it was sour. ~~So~~ She had to be very careful what she ate for years. But she did recover, and that Spring she went to the Catskill Mountains and took Al out of school. ~~And~~ I was very resentful that she took Al out of school and didn't take me out of school ^{also} to go with her to the Catskill Mountains. ~~And~~ I stayed behind with dad. And there was no teaching of what might happen to girls. I started to mature without knowing what was happening. To this day I am rather bosomy. But mother took tea towels that her mother had woven and embroidered and would tighten it around me ^{with safety pins} to make me flat. How does a not quite eleven year old already blossom out? It was unheard of. And so I remember that part of it.

K. That's a question I will come to later, but why did she do that?

Y. I wasn't quite eleven and I was already blossoming out as we would say now. In 1918 I suppose with the old country mores, I don't know. Because she had a beautiful figure. She was always a perfect thirty-six, and she modeled shirtwaists. You know being a perfect thirty-six in those days was something. And I remember the corsets she wore. I don't think they had bras in those days, but her figure was always beautiful. So she probably didn't mature until she was older, so how did she discuss it with me. You don't discuss it with a child.

K. How did your father feel about your mother working?

Y. When she came back from Russia she didn't work for a period, and then in 1919, after she had recovered some of her health, she and another friend from Waterbury Connecticut who was from the same area of Russia that they had come from so they were lanslites (~~what is the correct word~~) ^{were} lanslites. ^{when} you come from the same area and ^{lanslites} are raised there. They used to have ^a lanslie organization (or groups). ~~And so~~ she and this woman opened up a candy store in a theatre lobby to raise money to be able to go to California. That time they had probably been discussing ~~that they were~~ going to go to California when I graduated from grammar school. ~~And~~ So that was their aim, ~~so~~ to get more money, and dad would sell his share of the barber shop, which was a four-chair, ^{and it} which was considered a large barber shop,

- Y. ~~a four chair shop~~, and doing pretty good, ~~would sell the shop~~. And mother would let Aida, that was her name, have the candy store. ~~And~~ I remember going to the candy store and making myself great big chocolate sundaes and things because I was always a glutton for sweets.
- K. What about your father? He never minded her working as a shirtwaist model?
- Y. When ~~he~~^{she} first came here? No he didn't because it was through the Garment Workers Union. Although the union wasn't recognized she worked where the union would tell her to go and on whatever job she was given.
- K. She was a member of the union?
- Y. Yes, and then dropped that membership. Whether she took a withdrawal or not, I don't know those details because as you know she did not go back to work in that industry when she came back ^{from Russia}. But they were supporters of the different actions for Socialist candidates who ran and ~~some~~^{even} ~~who~~ got elected to the Assembly. I remember going to rallies with them for a man named Shiplikoff ^{who was} ~~to elect~~^{ad} ~~him~~ ~~to be~~ an Assemblyman. But I don't know what year it was, whether it was in 1918, or 1917, or even 1919.

And in those years there was what you call a Socialist Sunday School, held at ~~the~~ Labor Lyceum^s in different areas where they had Labor Lyceums or Socialist buildings. Groups of children would go and the basics of socialism were ~~supposed~~ to be taught. Don't ask me what was taught because I really don't remember. I do remember, however, that the Labor Lyceum in Brooklyn burned down. And going there and finding - there were no radios - there weren't ^{the} media like you have now - no television. So when the kids arrived there ~~from~~^{for} Sunday school and found the building burned down we cried. Some of us I am sure didn't know why we were crying, but this was something we looked forward to because there was singing, and there was May Day. After the parade we would go to the park and have little picnics and gatherings so it was a day of festivity and you would work up towards it. What period it was that the Labor Lyceum burned down and how close it was to May Day I don't recall, frankly. It was just secondary actually.

- Y. And my folks, which I didn't know for many, many years, became charter members of the Communist Party. That was in 1919. They left the Socialist Party and joined the Communist Party when it was formed. But later on they were among those, because they were shop owners, small business men, ^{asked to leave} ~~got out of~~ the Party. Because in that period, the Nepman period, n-e-p-m-a-n, they were considered part of the establishment, the bourgeoisie, the exploiters, whether they had -
- K. How terrible - I'll have to remember that.
- Y. Yes. Look it up. I don't know the complete story, or why or when, and never looked into it because even years later when I myself became active I didn't look into that period. I just knew they were back in the movement again. I didn't ask why.
- K. What was your father's attitude toward women in the family?
- Y. I Recall that they almost always went to ~~the Barber's Union~~ ^{to} meetings. ~~They went together, if there were~~ lectures and things like that. So that the relationship there was probably a very close one. ~~No never mind.~~ I don't ever recalling him say ^{my} "this is for men only". "You can't come with ~~me~~." I don't ever recall that. And as I say, even went to burlesque shows together, And they took the kids too. There were free passes. I saw Fanny Brice and Sophie Tucker and all those old timers. I saw those as a kid. But it made no impact. ~~I don't recall.~~
- K. What I was trying to find out - your mother was working. Your father was working. What was his attitude toward housework, for instance - toward raising you kids?
- Y. As I recall it. Dad did very little housework. Yet the house was always spic and span, so mother did most of it, I am sure because they never hired anyone to do any domestic work all their lives. Even when they were ill later on we had to argue with them to have someone in to do the chores. ~~So that was part of their - so as I say~~ ^{my} mother did not work for a number of years until she opened up that candy store. There was about a seven year period when she was just quote a "housewife," close quotes, so that she did most of the housework.
- K. What about decisions on finances and how to raise you and

K. your brother?

Y. Well I don't recall. ^a lot of the discussions, when we were quite small, took place in Russian because we didn't understand it. But once we came back from Russia I had picked up the language quite fluently. In fact had conversations with my father to show that I knew the Russian language. They decided that there was no use in talking Russian anymore because I would turn around ^{and} say to ^{my brother} ~~him~~ "guess what they are talking about." ~~So that ended.~~ So when their discussions went on I don't know.

When we came back we had separate bedrooms. My brother and I had a bedroom with separate beds. My parents had a bedroom. Then when my aunt and her family moved in they took the bedroom and the four of us were in one bedroom. There were two bedrooms, a kitchen and living room. It was a four room apartment.

K. How were you punished when you did something they didn't like?

Y. I don't recall being punished by them except that one time when I was, I believe, in the eighth grade. I went with my girl friend to synagogue rather than to go to school. Because on all the Jewish holidays I went to school. And while most of the upper classes were vacant - most of the students - there were Italians and Jewish - that was the neighborhood there - when we got to the higher grades even the Italian kids stayed away, so that the seventh and eighth grades were empty. I would have to go to a classroom -

K. Didn't you tell me about your teacher, Dorothy?

Y. Yes. Dorothy Harding.

K. But you didn't mention anything about what he did to you because you didn't go.

Y. Well, that was the only time I didn't go, and he asked me how Dorothy was, and I said I didn't see her, and ~~he~~ said "What the matter? Is she sick? Who was the substitute?" And I said, "No, I didn't go to school" And he said, "What do you mean, you didn't go?" And I said Goldie and I went to shul, to synagogue to hear the shofer". And then he slapped me. And that is the only time I can recall being punished. ~~So it probably made no impact on me, what methods.~~ I remember my father slapped

- Y. my face and said, "I told you you were to have nothing to do with anything religious until you are eighteen, and then if you want to become a nun -"
- K. Why did he bring up this matter of a nun. Was it just a figure of speech?
- Y. Just a figure of speech because we would go into the Flatbush area which was primarily Christian and there would be churches, and I would want to know what that ^{woman} ~~was~~ ^{dressed that way} and he told me that was a nun. Or a man with a turned collar. I was inquisitive. I asked. I wasn't exposed to anything. I ~~had~~ never gone to any of these churches. So he told me that was a priest. He knew, but I didn't. Of course there was nothing similar to that in the Jewish religion. ~~She~~ He said if you want to stop the fires on Friday evening and burn the candles do it, but not until you are eighteen. He didn't just say that if you want to become ^{a nun} ~~christian~~. If you want to become anything in the religious persuasion then you have to be eighteen, and not before.
- K. What kind of chores did you have at home, if any?
- Y. Well, when mother was ill I tried to feed her. Sometimes when a sudden storm would start and clothes were out on the line I would have to help mother wheel it in quickly, get it off so the storm wouldn't hurt the clothes. I remember the lines of clothing hanging outside ~~there~~. So I didn't have any ^{things} ~~specific~~ ^{tasks}, I wasn't taught to cook. And mother was an excellent cook. Or ~~bake~~ - and to this day I don't bake because I wasn't taught those things.
- K. Why do you think she didn't teach you?
- Y. Well, I guess at that time it was to have me get an education and to do my schoolwork ~~and~~ I never went to dancing school. ~~but~~ took piano lessons. They did buy a piano ~~which to this day is considered very~~ - that was another thing mother said we needed additional finances for. They bought this piano on credit, ~~that~~ was why she went into business so that she would have the money to pay off the piano and to be able to take it with them when they ~~would~~ ^{went} go to California. ~~and~~ ^{my} brother also took piano lessons. I took it for nine years ~~and~~ ^{but} I haven't touched a piano for ~~thirty years or more~~ ^{now} ~~years~~ ⁱⁿ ~~fifty two years~~ I don't think I have touched a piano.

y. except maybe to run a scale. ~~So~~ there were a number of hours practicing each day. I understand that I took it up quite well and my piano teacher was very pleased at my progress, but I guess I couldn't care less. Sure I learned to play Humoresque by heart with its flats and its sharps and what have you, but really I wasn't interested in that. I recall one illness I had, but I went into that. I was in the first grade and we were living at that time in a small apartment that was part of the building where dad's barbershop was, but you did not go into the living quarters through the barber shop. It had a separate entrance. And I had, I believe, it was scarlet fever, and I suddenly started to go blind. I was an onery kid, and when the teacher would talk to me if I didn't want to answer I would yell out and say _____

"What is it you want?" in Russian. They finally sent for my mother and said are you sure the child was born in the United States - ~~she~~ who doesn't speak good English and when asked a question answers it in Russian? ~~And~~ ^{she} they had to come up with my birth certificate to prove that it was me.

I want to go back even a little bit. My parents were not legally married until we left for Russia. So called free love. It was very prevalent in those days. My brother and I accompanied the family to the city hall on the way to the ship where they got legally married. She took my father's name, ^{when they got together} ~~she~~ She didn't stay with her own name, ~~she~~ She assumed his name. So they were free-thinkers from way back. ~~So~~ I don't recall the exact place where the city hall was. It was in Manhattan, and we went on to the ship, with a phony name. So the whole history there - the mores and the struggle for rights of people to conduct themselves in a way that proved beneficial to all and not to just a few.

K. In those days did people your age have allowances?

Y. No. First of all I don't recall allowances. When I ~~became~~ came to California I did have an allowance when I went to high school, but not in New York or anything like that.

K. Did you ever have to work for it?

Y. Not that I can recall. No. There was none of it if you don't do this you are not going to get that. While they were not wealthy they were always very generous. And later on when we got to California I was really a spoiled kid.

K. Did your family treat you any differently than they treated your brother?

Y. As I say I was very resentful that mother took Al to the Catskills. I had never been there, and she was going to the Catskills and taking him out of school. I certainly wasn't a lover of school. She got permission to take him out of school, ~~and~~ ^{but} they didn't take me. Then when I did graduate in June of 1920, we left ⁱⁿ July for California. They sold the businesses and whatever furniture they were going to sell, but not the piano, and we moved to California. We landed in Lemon Grove, which is about twenty miles from San Diego proper. Of course by that time one of his [my father's] sisters lived in Lemon Grove and her husband had a tailor shop, a men's tailor shop, in San Diego proper. ~~And~~ ^{They} they had two children who were about the same age as my brother and I. The son was my age. The daughter was Al's age. ~~And we lived there only a few months~~ ^{High school} and I went to a small country high school. We had to go by electric train. It ~~was~~ ^{took} a half hour. It turned out I was the only Jewish ancestry pupil there. All the others were Portuguese, Italian, ^{and} I don't know what other nationalities. It didn't make no never mind to me, what ethnic group. And I got into quite a number of arguments over being Jewish. I was accused of saying I was Jewish to make arguments. To this day I've been sort of - ~~very few~~ people say "I didn't know you were Jewish, I thought you were French or Italian." I don't know why because I don't look any different than my cousins. I am almost the exact double of one of my aunts who is still alive in her late eighties, one of my father's sisters. And there was another sister of my father who looked ~~an awful~~ lot like my mother and they were taken for sisters rather than my father and this sister being taken for brother and sister. But I remember one of the arguments we had. It was lunchtime, We were sitting

Y. eating and there was something I had that was unusual my mother had baked, ~~and~~ she was an exquisite baker. And it looked like each one had been dipped into honey and coconut on ~~top~~. I have never learned the recipe, but I just loved it. It took a lot of work. I would watch her and help her chop the nuts and chop the raisens and everything that went ~~on~~, but just how much proportion or anything I didn't know. So I had quite a number in my lunch basket because it turned out that about six or eight of us would eat lunch together and it depended on what our last class was, or an assignment, or what we were in. We were sitting there eating and I passed this around and somebody said, "What is it?" And I said "I really don't know what you would call it in English, but this is what my mother calls it in Yiddish," and I called it ^{her} the Yiddish name which I've even forgotten now because we started calling it her coconut cookies. And, "What do you mean, Yiddish?" I said, "Well, that's what it is. It is a Russian Jewish recipe." Well, "You're just saying you are Jewish because you want to have an argument with us." You know "Jews don't share their ^{things} cooking." I said, "What do you mean. I've been here three months. Some of us come from different areas and find out ^{themselves} living in Lemon Grove. What do you know about the Jews?" "Oh, they are stingy, and you're not." And I said, "Well, what makes you think I'm not Jewish?" So ^{there's} ~~that~~ stereotype of what a Jew is supposed to be like. ^{continued the} So ~~they had a big~~ argument ^{as we} and they went ~~to~~ our next class - algebra. A man who had just come out of the service - ^{Appleby} ~~Rafferty~~ was his name, ~~and~~ he liked to be called ^{Appleby} ~~Captain Rafferty~~ - not Mr. - was our teacher. And one of the students said, "What do you think of this, Captain Appleby? She says she's Jewish." And we had quite a discussion. And that was the first sort of frontal attack. ^{It} That was my first sort of meeting head on ^{with} ~~of~~ anti-Semitism. Although while we were in Russia there was a pogrom, ^{but} I think I told you ^{how} we were hidden.

K. No, you didn't tell me.

APogrom in Russia

Y. It was ^{during} ~~on~~ the high holidays and my aunt was still there with her children, and everybody started running in and

Y. rounding up the children. And some of us were hidden in the basement. I was hidden with several others on top of the stove. That's why I remember the bed so well on top of the stove, and told to lay still and not even to cough if it choked us because something terrible was happening, and that the pogrumniks, ^{which} ~~that~~ is those who were on the side of - the pogrumniks were no Jews. ~~They~~ were attacking Jews. They ~~pogrum~~ were agents of the ~~U~~zar, factory owners and what have you, who on high holidays would attack synagogues and areas ~~where~~ where there were Jewish settlements. I didn't know what ^{it was all} ~~about it~~, so afterwards we were told. We laid there. To us it seemed like ^{an} endless ^{time}. I don't know whether we were there a half hour, an hour, or just ten minutes, but it was ~~an~~ endless thing laying under the covers. And the stove wasn't lit because it was a holiday period. There was no baking going on when there was a holiday period. Although the stove may have been lit, because during the holiday period a gentile would come in to stoke the fires. The orthodox Jews would not.

K. Oh yes, I heard about the Shabbus Goy.

Y. Yes. He would come in to ~~stoke~~ the fires. So perhaps it was. I don't quite remember that, but it was an endless thing. And after there was a discussion - not with the children - about the pogrom that had gone on, how many had been wounded, and the fighting, and how many houses had been burned down, and how far away. But they hadn't quite gotten - I guess when they had gotten to the area of my grandparents, their farm and the other farm of my uncle who gave me the name of Who~~Z~~ is Dos, were adjacent, and they were surrounded mostly with other Gentiles. They were outside of the village proper in the farmland. Those two houses were sort of adjacent, but all around there were other farmers. So they probably hadn't gotten that far, but there was danger that they would come that far. And they were talking about so and so in the village who had gotten hurt or the house burned down.

But this confrontation at the high school, the whole semester of 1920 - was the first that I became aware of. I

- Y. hadn't met it in New York as a child where I went to school because there were so many Jewish students in all the schools I went to, in the public schools that I went to.
- K. How did your parents react to the story when you took it home?
- Y. They said, "Well that is part of what the employers try to do to everybody. Divide and rule. They will tell you you are Black, you're this, you're that, so you would have nothing to do with one another." And that was part of the imperialism, I don't think they used the word imperialism to me because I wouldn't know what they meant, but part of the exploitation of people by trying to keep them divided. And making up stories. I am sure that there are Jews who are stingy, but there are also Italians who are stingy. There are also other people who are stingy. And there were no Blacks around in the area where we were. I do recall an ^{incident} I don't know whether I told you this.

One of the Thursdays when we were going to Manhattan and we were transferring to the subway, My mother and dad ~~were sitting~~ ^{had seats}, and my brother and I ~~were sitting~~ ^{also seated}. Then the car became crowded. And a Black woman who was pregnant and had another child with her got on the car, and I started to get up to give her my seat, and told my brother to get on mom's lap because there she was - I don't think I ~~had known~~ ^{knew} the word pregnant, but I had heard that ^a women who ~~were~~ like this were going to have a baby. How or what I didn't know. And a woman sitting in back of my parents when I got on to their lap said "Nigger lover." I didn't know what she meant, and it took me a heck of a long time to find out what was meant by that. But I had been taught that if older people come and need a seat, or someone having children, that they need a seat too; that a child by itself shouldn't have a seat.

End of tape.

First side

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K. In line with your talking of getting up to give your seat to this Black woman - in what other ways did your families Socialist attitudes affect their treatment of you and your brother?

Y. Well I imagine it had a great deal to do with how they treated us and what they hoped we would accomplish - especially to attain an education which neither one of them had to any extent in this country. Mother began writing letters in English, but it always was phonetic English because she never went to school. So the spelling of course, and the pronunciation of it you really had to understand, but she attempted to keep communication with us through the years, ~~and~~ we moved in San Diego proper, I was just three months in the high school I was describing out in the country.

My dad by then had bought a small department store ~~it was called~~. It had a women's department and a men's department, ~~in~~ the main street towards the naval area. San Diego was a naval town where there were a lot of naval tailors. So this was a department store, medium-sized. It was just one story, but it carried quite a lot of very nice things. At that time there were silk stockings from Paris with arrows and butterflies and things like that, ^{also} ~~and they had~~ a full line of hats and very exquisite shoes ~~and there was~~ yardage. And the woman ~~whom~~, that worked for the previous owner, Mrs. Fischer, who was Mexican-American. And that was my first association with anyone of Mexican ancestry, a direct association. She had been married to a sailor whose name was Fisher. She was a widow. And my parents, who were running the store, retained her to be manager and buyer. She knew all the places to go, the wholesale places, and they were new ~~at~~ that. Dad found that it was too hard for him to try to barber standing on his feet. He had had rheumatism on and off and it was getting too much for him. Mother did not look for any other work, but she was going to help in the store. So I would go with Mrs. Fisher to some of

- Y. the wholesale houses, and if I saw some hand painted georgette that I wanted, and it would take three yards to make me a dress or something, the threeyards were ordered. And mother would sew. She was doing a lot of sewing, ^{she was} very exquisite seamstress, ^{also} She taught herself because she did not work in a factory as ^a seamstress. And She made coats and thinks like ~~that forme~~ capes. I had a cape that I remember to this day and wish that I could have a duplicate. She made that ^{before we came} cross country ~~coming~~ to California. She had bought a sewing machine. I believe it was when they first got back from Connecticut. And of course it was among the things that were stored when she went to Europe, ~~with us~~. And She hung on to that sewing machine and always made my brother's shirts and my dresses. So I was considered well dressed. The actual cost was probably less than going to a store to buy it because she did the sewing and the designing and things.
- K. Did your family seem to think there was any contradiction between dressing you up so well and their socialist outlook on things?
- Y. No. They didn't believe that the lot of the worker was to go around in ~~raags~~ ^{raags} and things. They thought there was nothing too good for a worker, and they felt we should struggle to attain it, and my wearing a dress that looked like it might be ten dollars in those days which only cost two which was what they would have had to pay for a rag they saw no contradiction because it didn't cost more than the two, that they would have had to pay in the store. Labor didn't count. Mother wasn't working and that was unpaid labor you know.
- K. How did you get along with your brother?
- Y. Well, he was younger than I was. Of course I was always domineering. I knew better than he did. And it wasn't until quite a number of years ^{later} in 1923 and 1924 when I went through some personal grievances I thought I sure wish now that you were the older brother and could tell me rather than being the younger and you don't want to talk to me. So that was part of it. But we were never

Y. too close because he was the student - I wasn't. He went on to Cal. and got his Masters and so on, and but he never did quite get his doctorate because he got married in '32. I don't remember any physical struggles with him or anything. We fought back and forth about different things. I couldn't help him with his schoolwork because I wasn't ^{proficient} in that area. When I came up to L.A. I had quit High school in my senior A year. I went through that, and I came up and went ^{to} through business college and went to work, and then got married in '25, and so that's that particular period. I had my daughter in '27. Off and on I worked ^{in many} at different places ~~xxxxx~~ in that period, but not for a very long time and then ^{here} I told you how I entered the movement, ~~I think.~~

K. Did your mother and father agree on most things?

Y. I never heard them argue about anything political. If they supported a candidate it seemed to me that both would agree regardless of what persuasion he might be. I indicated that they were members of the CP and the Workers Party which I didn't know. I don't know that particular history, but they remained in the party until mother died and then dad became a vegetable so he didn't know whether he was a member or not. ~~He couldn't walk or --~~

K. Well, did you ever hear them disagree about anything?

Y. Well, they disagreed about when Earl and I got together. Mother seemed to take it in a different light than I expected her to take it, with "how could I do that," you know, and "how could I bring a ^{Japanese into the family?} mixed marriage, although I had been married to an Irish man for so many years, but that wasn't so bad. But when Karl and I got together - and I was really shocked by that because all my life, as I indicated, there was never any indication that there was any difference because of ^{the} color of your skin. It was your ^{actions} ~~make up~~ that counted. You were either good or bad. There was good and bad among all people. It wasn't because he or she was brown or yellow or black that made the difference. So I was quite shocked, and there was this period for almost ^{five} years, ~~or not quite that long,~~ when we would go to L.A. (because I left my daughter with them, on the basis of the agreement that I had with

Y. my former husband) and we would go down to visit L.A.- either Karl would have to go and speak about the Ryodo Shimburn or some other Japanese occurrence or I had to go down for an ILD conference, a statewide conference, and then a couple of times during the year at other times we had to go down and see Joyce, and if Karl was along he would go and sleep at some other comrade's home, and I would stay at my parents. Finally -

K. What about your father?

Y. He didn't think there was any such difference. Then finally one night we drove a borrowed car and we had difficulties and so we didn't get in until about three in the morning, ^{because of trouble} in getting over the old Grapevine Road and came there and of course we had to ring the bell because they weren't sitting up for us, and dad came to the door and Karl went to put in my suitcase, and mother came to the door, ^{also} and dad said to her in Yiddish (Karl didn't understand it) "Are you going to ask him in? If not, I will, and you can go wherever you want to go." So Karl said no, Sadie (that was the name of the other comrade who lived not too far away from my folks) expects me. But dad said, "They don't expect you no three o'clock in the morning. She expected you about nine." ~~Because~~ She probably had called ^{them} up to see if we had arrived. And ^{again} He asked him ^{was a} to stay, because there were places to sleep. There wasn't any question of putting anybody out of bed because they had one of these drop beds in the living room, a ~~Murphy bed~~. So That's where I would sleep by myself. It was a great big double one. ~~So dad told him to come in, and he did, and that sort of~~ ^{invitation} opened up a whole new avenue, but mother was still skittish about it until I was pregnant with Tommy and that was in thirty eight (38) and then there were no holds barred.

K. How very interesting. Now let's get into your mother a little bit. What contact did she have with the Garment Workers Union? - when you were in New York and she was modeling shirtwaists?

Y. And ^{as} I understand it she would go and help wherever they were trying to ^{organize} you know if it was a shop where she could

DAD invited him
IN bot

- Y. help to talk to the women in Russian or in Yiddish to tell them that they should unionize or to join the Socialist movement ~~because they were in the Socialist movement~~, and get them to read I imagine whatever periodicals of the day were, I don't know because I was very young at the time and I don't know any of that particular history. They never really fully discussed it with us.
- K. What about the Women's Trade Union League and Rose Schneiderman? Did she ever discuss that?
- Y. No. We were out of ~~a~~nything to do with unions directly. Now, I began aware of the Trade Union Unity League or Educational League through the contact they had with Ed's father who was a member. He had been a boomer Machinist and a member of the Knights of Labor, and their contact with trying to get ^{Ed}him in as a machinist to join the T.U.E.L. So that was how I would hear discussions ~~so that~~ ^{but} I wasn't involved too much in that until I became a member of the I.L.D. and a lot of them were arrested. Then I had a closer association. And I wasn't in a union until the thirties when they started to organize the office workers. Although I was working for the I.L.D. I did join the office workers, ^{UNION} I wasn't getting union wages because it was a non-profit organization with dues of ten cents and twenty five cents a month. There wasn't too much funds ~~for paying so that~~ my pay was \$10.00 a week from the I.L.D.
- K. To get back to your mother then. There was a big strike in 1913 in New York. You were seven then. There was a big garment workers strike in New York. Do you remember her discussing that at all?
- Y. No, I don't remember her discussing it. I recall when World War I started there were discussions what is going to happen to some of their family that was still in the old country in Russia.
- K. There is just one other thing about your life when you were very young. You never told me what the bad experience was your father had with religion and why he turned against it.

- Y. His father was what was called a Malamud, a teacher of Hebrew, for private ^{pupils} ~~schools~~ because there were no schools that Jewish children could go to, especially in small villages. And his father, although he had been deaf since he was fifteen, was a teacher and I understand quite a brilliant teacher and scholar. However when any of the paying pupils committed some act, throwing a spitball or whatever kids ~~did~~ in the 1800's, I don't know, my grandfather would call my father and ^{his} ~~my father's~~ older brother (there was still an older brother but he had a family of his own already) these were the two ^{youngest boys} ~~smaller ones~~. There had been fourteen, ^{children} but in between it seemed like every other one passed away. ~~so~~ ^{There} was five years difference, ^{between} ~~three years difference.~~ ^{the two boys} ~~It wasn't as though there were fourteen children right in a row as there would have been had they all - so that the brother than was five years older than my brother was also in the school.~~ ^{their father} And he would call them up in front and ask them to lower their trousers. He would take a little whip with leather thongs on it and spank them on their bare ^{behinds} - these were all boys in the class - girls didn't go to school - and hit them with the ship and admonish the rest of the class that if ^{they did that again} ~~any of you do that~~ that's what you'll get. But these paying pupils never had that happen to them. So my father one day right in class exploded and said, "If ~~this is what your learning is all about you can have it.~~ I don't want to have anything to do with it." I don't know how old he was then. But his other brother was ~~five years older than he.~~ And he said, "If that's what your teaching is all about - to take someone who hasn't committed anything wrong and punish them," ^{you can have it.} So that was the only thing that I know of that happened because he ^{I don't want to have anything to do with it.} ~~did tell us about that.~~ ^{I don't know how old he was then.}
- K. Then how did he convince your mother to go along with him on this?
- Y. Well, my mother on the other hand had been in a ^{strike} ~~a~~, when she was ^{eight} ~~eight~~ and my father was ten, and ^{at} ~~in~~ Richmond's mother was ^{also} ~~in~~ that strike. They came from the same area, and I

Y. knew her too, ~~all my life, or her life.~~ They were in the strike which was against bad conditions, ~~where~~ ^{where} they were child laborers.

K. In the match factory?

Y. In the match factory in the village, the one industry outside of farming that was there. And so they started ^{working there.} ~~that and~~ their parents were used ^{by the bosses} to influence them ~~to~~ not to be on strike because they were then threatened, — ^{i.e.} the parents were threatened. Now if they were working in the factory their jobs would be taken away from them if they allowed their children to behave the way they were behaving. Of if they were the ones who were providing produce or something they wouldn't buy from them. Whatever it was in connection with the factory, ~~Their homes would~~ ^{also} be burned down. ~~So pressure was being brought to bear by the parents so the children wouldn't be in the strike.~~ But both of ~~them~~ ^{my parents} I guess from an early age were very firm in their beliefs and learned quite early that things were wrong that something like that can happen where they saw the factory owner having a carriage not just an open log to sit on like my grandfather had— this horse and ^{open} wagon which ~~was just a bed.~~ It could be a truck bed now with logs on it, and ~~with different things~~ he would pick up for the factory and the children would have to sit out

in the rain or snow to get to work where the owner of the factory came in a carriage that was sheltered from the elements, whether it was the sun or ~~whether it was the~~

rain. ^{The owner driven} ~~he was brought~~ there and probably everybody bowing to him, ^{as he went into his office where} ~~and probably his samovar~~ ^{the children} going. ~~They~~ ^{was} might have been craving a hot drink and all they had maybe was a

water dipper to take a drink of water. The rebellion was there right from an early age. And of course the anti-

semitic ^{SA} ~~of~~ ^{CG Czarist} Czarist Russia was much more intense and violent than ~~what happened~~ in other countries during that period. Similar to the lynchings and other ^{atrocities going on} ~~things~~ against the Blacks in this country.

K. Was there any line of demarcation between their rejection of religion, but maintaining their Jewishness?

Y. They both read, wrote and spoke Jewish, Yiddish rather than Hebrew, ^{which} ~~They didn't speak the language~~ although dad was able to read ~~it~~ and carry on conversations ⁱⁿ with it. But it was a strictly Yiddish type of language that they pursued, and read all kinds of poems and plays and Sholem Aleicham. ^{writings of} ~~And the different Yiddish plays~~ ^{Lally} that we were taken to, the Jewish theatre in New York. It wouldn't be just because it was a Jewish play, but it would have some meaning taken from some story like the Dybbuk. ~~And some of the actors~~ ^{and actresses} were outstanding and were making theatre history, ~~Some of the actors and actresses~~ that were in the theatre. And that had a big influence on us.

Dad had made up his mind he wouldn't serve in the Czarist army. ^{and decided to leave for the U.S.} I understand the family tried to persuade him not to. ~~But one of his~~ ^{eldest} brothers had already gone to Israel at that time with his family. ~~That was his oldest brother,~~ and he was there several years and then moved to Argentina. ~~And that part of that family is in Argentina.~~ ^{still there} His brother lived to be one hundred. So there is longevity in that part of the family. ~~And that was the oldest brother. He~~ ~~had a number of children.~~ As I indicated the rest of the six surviving children came to the United States - all before 1909. Dad was here before the 1905 revolution. Mother, I don't know what month she left Russia, whether ^{the revolution} it had already started ^{or not.} there, ~~the 1905.~~ ^{however} Both of them considered themselves 1905ers because they had been active in the underground Bund and probably laid the basis for part of that uprising in 1905.

When World War I started mother found out after communications were open, since Russia was an ally, that two of her brothers were in the Czarist army, and that her folks hadn't heard from them for quite some time. It was I believe after 1922 when they started getting communications from the family regularly for a while, and then it stopped again and then it started again.

K. What was their attitude toward World War I?

- Y. They were anti World War One.
- K. Why? Were they pacifists?
- Y. In a way. Although they felt that if you had to fight you should fight for your rights. On the other hand this was ~~was~~ an imperialist war. It was not ^a war that would benefit the workers. And it was just to enrich the munition makers and those that had rather than those that had not.
- K. Did they discuss the Mooney case at all?
- Y. Well, I don't think they were so aware of the Mooney case. They were on the East Coast.
- K. You were too young too when the McNamara case came up.
- Y. Yes. And ~~I don't think that the impact~~ - I don't recall them ever mentioning the IWW for instance which was on the uprise from about 1904 on. And ~~certainly in 1910~~ ¹⁹¹⁰ the ⁹ bombing played a role in another area. ^{in California primarily} I don't recall them mentioning the IWW even, or what they thought of it.]
- K. What about the Palmer raids?
- Y. I guess since they were sort of small cogs, you might say, in the Socialist movement, and even though they were charter members of the Communist Party, the Palmer raids started ~~after that~~, I believe after the birth of the CP, ^{they were} ~~in 1919~~.
- K. In 1919.
- Y. That same year. But neither one of them that I can recall spoke at anything or conducted a meeting. They might have attended, but they were perhaps unknown quantities among the supportive masses and played no visible role. Because there were thousands upon thousands no one ever heard about, and they were among them.
- K. I just wondered whether you remembered them discussing that.
- Y. No. I don't recall them discussing it at all. It may have been - I recall in 1921 Mother Bloor came to San Diego, and she stayed at our house. Now I didn't know her from Eve, and they didn't tell me her background ~~or~~ - Now Mother Bloor in the twenties and to her death was a sparkplug not only in the labor movement but in the Communist movement

- Y. So that I didn't know who she was. She seemed to be an old lady even then staying at our house, and mother saying she was going to address a meeting in support of the Russian Revolution. And they had such a meeting in San Diego. I was as surprised I guess as anyone. I went to that meeting, but don't ask me what went on there. I was fourteen - fourteen and half by then I guess - I didn't know what it was all about, but I went. And it was quite a big meeting for San Diego I understand, and there were quite a number of people there who were in support of the Russian Revolution. I think that the occupation was still going on and of course the intent to kill that revolution is well known and documented. I don't have to ~~talk about that~~ ~~give that~~. So that was my first knowledge of anything that they were supportive of the revolution.
- K. In other words, just verbal?
- Y. Yes. So this was a meeting that I went to. As far as the Socialist Sunday School, it stopped ~~being~~ ^{existing} when there was this division among the Socialists. Now which faction my parents belonged to in the Socialists I don't know, but the fact that they did join the Communist Party indicates that they did not agree with the hierarchy of the Socialist Party of the U.S. at that time.
- K. Let's get some more about your mother. Was she interested in suffrage at all?
- Y. When suffrage came into being I know she exercised that right. She went to vote, so that she must have known about it. I don't recall her going to any suffragette meetings, ~~because~~ I did not go to a lot of meetings that she or dad went to. But I recall that she went to vote as soon as they had the right to vote. She registered to vote. I remember when I became of age she made sure that I went to register. Although I was married she made sure that I went to register.
- K. Did she like housework?
- Y. She was very good at it, but she was sort of a very determined person who did a lot of things that a lot of other people didn't do.
- K. Like what?

Y. Well, going to meetings. A lot of women didn't go to meetings in those days. She would go with my father. To me it wasn't unusual. I didn't know that wasn't the thing to do. It wasn't accepted in some of the other circles, but she would go.

K. Even in Socialist circles?

Y. In some of the meetings you would find mostly men. Even ~~in this~~ ^{she went to} meetings in San Diego I remember she mentioned a name, and said "I just can't understand why his wife wasn't there."

Side Two

Counter #1
K. Did your mother drive?

Y. *no,* it was in the late twenties when we got our first car?

K. Why didn't your mother drive?

Y. She didn't think she would be able to drive. First of all after her surgery there were a number of years when she had to be on such a strict diet. And they didn't have the techniques ^{now}. When part of your stomach is removed there are other avenues of having to digest your food and other things. She had to eat slowly. She had to eat just certain things. She would get nauseated rather quickly. And I imagine if she had that type of surgery now there wouldn't be those affects throughout the years which she suffered.

K. What was her attitude toward prohibition. Do you remember that?

Y. I remember my dad making homemade vishnak, ~~at home~~. But I don't recall my mother ever taking a drink unless there was some occasion, you know, like a wedding or an engagement or a birthday party. She would always have a toast but she took very little there again because of her ^{stomach} - I recall as a small child going to the corner saloon near my dad's barber shop and getting big buckets of beer and carrying it home for him. But at that time there was no prohibition and the children could take home big buckets of beer with the suds on top. I always called it suds. Carrying it home, I recall that. Dad drank beer, But I don't ever recall any drinking problem or any one in the whole family being a so-called drinker.

K. One other thing. Did she make many friends outside of the family?

K. You had an extended family, I know, and saw them a lot.

Y. Yes, we had quite a number it seemed. There was a big circle of ^{ent}landslide* and they would gather in the house often.

They had meetings in our home. And all kinds of benefits.

She was very active in the Women's Council, an organization in the twenties after we came to L.A. where they had women's organizations. They called them the Women's Councils, mostly Jewish women. Their meetings were conducted in Yiddish.

K. Were they left wing?

Y. Yes. Left wing, and supportive of the Soviet ^{regime} machine, petitioning for our government to recognize the Soviet Union.

K. Who was the most active socialist, your father or your mother?

Y. I think mother was more active when dad was tied up in business. He wouldn't able to ^{get} go away and go to something. Of course the so-called department store was open nights too. A lot of the sailors came off of their ships at night. So it was opened nights. And mother would go home at a certain hour. So she might go back downtown ^{and} take the streetcar, because we did not have a car, to the meeting. And dad when he closed the shop would probably meet her there if he wasn't too tired. The family would be represented. A lot of meetings were held in the house ^{but} that I didn't participate in. I would go in my own room and do my homework, so that I really didn't know a good deal of what was going on.

K. Just a second. Let's get back to this business of them being removed from the party. I read a lot of party history, but I don't remember that period.

Y. There was a period, ^{which began} and in the Soviet Union ^{when} too, small ^{people} business, even if they had been supportive of the Bolshevik revolution, they were considered as agents of the establishment. ^{as parties} you would call it today, those who had, and ^{also} not being workers ^{they wouldn't be able to} couldn't see the workers point of view. It was in the early twenties.

K. So they were asked to leave?

Y. Yes, they were asked to leave as I understand it, and they did leave and then -

K. How did they feel about this?

Y. They probably could see the ^{party's} point of view ^{as there were} where some of the people, especially immigrants who came here and became petty bourgeois, shall we say, would say "well, 'It's all right for the painters to get such high wages, but why should my salesgirl?' - ^{relating to their own needs rather than to} equating to what they were in, ^{the needs of} not to get something their workers should have. Or they became small contractors, and society being what it is some of them ^{also} lost their ^{radical} point of view. And we find it is true today too. A lot of people who had been radical in their youth and now are affluent, they don't quite see it from the workers' point of view. They ^{see things in relation} equate it to whatever they are in - their personnel should not be involved.

K. How did they get back in then?

Y. I imagine when that ^{we} ban was lifted that whoever was in charge, I don't know, because I wasn't in then and I didn't know about their ^{involvement}.

K. I just wondered what their reaction was? Were they bitter?

Y. Their reaction, well as I say they were supportive of movements like Friends of the Soviet Union which started long long before the League Against War and Fascism. And there were a whole lot of ^{other progressive groups whose names} segments. I don't recall the exact names of these organizations. ^{that supported} But they were supportive of them. They always supported. And as I ^{said earlier} say when Mother Bloor came she stayed at our home. ^{However} And I didn't know her ^{there's} who or what she was. It was many years later that I met Mother Bloor and we sat down and talked, and when she heard ^{I was then} I was ^{told me she} already married then she knew my then father-in-law very well. They had been in struggle, in the Knights of Labor. She knew him from way back before I was even born, so they had a long relationship. And something came up and I said something about having gone to San Diego High School. And something else came up, and when I told her who my parents were, then she reminded me that she was the woman who stayed at our home. But ^{in front of me} there wasn't too much spoken, and the papers ^{radical} that would come ^{into our house} would be all in Yiddish so I couldn't read ^{that} them.

K. Let's get back to your adolescence and early childhood.

K. You talked about your mother opening the candy store.

How was the decision arrived at to come to California?

Y. As I indicated dad already had two sisters here in California and they were raving about the climate and everything else. And dad having rheumatism and finding it difficult to stand on his feet for ten hours or whatever the number of hours the shop was open, although there were two other people always working there. But it was standing on his feet primarily, and his feet were giving out on him so he just couldn't continue in that kind of an occupation. And mother had been so ill. And I developed quite rapidly, but my brother was small for his age. He is now six feet, but at that time he was small for his age. Mother was afraid that he might be sickly and would be better if we could come to California.

K. So it was a joint decision?

Y. Oh yes. It was a joint decision, and one of the sisters they hadn't seen for a good, good many years - ~~they came~~, and I believe dad's mother wanted to go to to see her other children. She wasn't well because she didn't survive long after we came to California. She died when she was, I believe, seventy. She was undergoing surgery for her diabetes ~~had settled~~ and neuralgia ^{which} had settled in her face and they said that surgery might help. On the other hand if she didn't have the surgery she would really just become a vegetable. So the three children that were here consented. My dad ~~in opening the mail~~, he was the first one who had to sign the paper. My grandfather ~~was~~ very deaf and couldn't understand English. Everything had to be interpreted. ~~He didn't have to sign because the consent, the children~~ ~~They had to sign because they were~~ assuming responsibility for doctors and hospital bills and what have you. She didn't survive. ~~She died.~~

K. I was going to ask you something else too. We were talking about your growing up during this period. How did you learn about menstruation?

Y. I learned it the hard way. I came home from school when my mother was up in the Catskills. Downstairs on the second floor was someone who came from the same village as my parents, and her family lived downstairs. ~~And~~ my mother said if I ever had any problems, you know, go to

Y. her. So I came in and felt very miserable and terrible pains across my stomach, and went into the bathroom and started to ~~hemorrhage~~ ^{hemorrhage} and I don't know what, and I started screaming and knocking on the floor so that the woman downstairs ran up. And when she saw me she started to laugh and the more she laughed the more I screamed, "What's happening? I'm dying. I'm dying, what's happening?"

K. Your mother never prepared you?

Y. No. I waseleven. I wasn't quite eleven. This was in the Spring and I was to become eleven in September. No, I was almost twelve. I will take it back, but I did not know anything about it because my mother never prepared me nor had I ever seen her when she menstruated, or what she did, so I didn't know that that was part of the thing of being a woman. And this woman just stood there. She was a rather robust woman, and with her hands on her hips, and laughing. And I said, "Why are you laughing? I'm dying." And she said "No, you are not. From now on this is going to happen to you every month." And I looked at her, and that's how I learned.

K. Did she develop that any further?

Y. No, it never was. In those years -

K. Did your mother discuss it with you when she came back?

Y. Oh, well, when I went up to the Catskills, (she stayed there several months) I went up there, and the following month before it was ~~the~~ time for my period I tried to tell her what had happened, and she sort of grinned too. Now whether that was the mores of the day I don't know. But that's what happend to me - ~~or how far~~ ^{for} in those years, in 1918, ~~had anything~~ ^{nothing had} been developed about preparing a female child ^{that I know of}.

K. What about sex. Did she discuss this with you?

Y. No, never.

K. Did you discuss it with your friends at school?

Y. Yes, sure. Dirty or obscene poetry was batted around. I wouldn't know what it meant until afterwards. I didn't understand some of the things that were being said. You see physically I had sort of matured. I had a bust which

- Y. most girls of that age were sort of flat. I was bound up and I remember my mother saying in Yiddish it is not nice. Every morning before I would go to school she would pin me up. I had to pin myself up after she went to the country.
- K. Did you ever rebel?
- Y. Frankly - maybe I was very immature or didn't know about rebelling about that, I really didn't. Now whether or not the downstairs neighbor told my dad what had happened I don't know. To this day I never did find out if he knew what was happening, or whether he wrote to my mother because she seemed to be surprised when I came up and told her about it. Maybe she was surprised because I mentioned it to her, and that so and so said (I have forgotten the neighbor's name, I used to know) - but I still remember this robust woman standing there just laughing, and then telling me to find an old towel or something and pin it up, and another one around this way. Who knew about sanitary belts, I didn't.
- K. I don't think they had them.
- Y. So it was a narrow strip around your stomach and whatever you had.
- K. What did you do, wash them afterwards?
- Y. Yes, you washed them because after all if you needed a big supply where would you get all those rags. They were soaked and hung out and re-used, and put in a separate pile.
- K. Well, how did you learn about sex if you didn't learn it from home?
- Y. ^{Said} I ~~say~~, from different talks and different kids as I grew up. It was never discussed at home. And I don't know to this day whether they finally discussed it with my brother or not. He was two and a half years younger - ~~so I don't~~ ^{know} whether they changed their ways ^{with him}.
- K. What were your expectations as to marriage? Did you ever think about it?
- Y. At that time, well I wasn't going to work as a bookkeeper which I didn't like. I told my boss I wasn't going to go back and

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Y. and take up a bookkeeping course because he wanted me to stay on. He liked my secretarial work but I didn't know about books. I got away from that. Ed and I didn't care about the Young Workers League.

K. What I mean was, when you were young how did you think about marriage?

Y. Well, I didn't give it, I think, too much thought. I don't recall every discussing it with anybody ^{saying} I'm going to get married, or going to have children. I always used to say, though, that I will have three children. I won't ever have two because two makes too much of a division. If you have three you have to divide it three ways.

K. Did you ever have a special girl friend that you talked to about things?

Y. Not particularly because when we were growing up most of other in my immediate neighborhood were ~~either~~ daughters of orthodox Jews and they would go to the different services and things like that, and I didn't go. Came Sunday morning I would go to Socialist Sunday school where ~~they~~ ^{there} was singing in Yiddish and then in English, workers songs, and some stories somebody would read from a book. Some I would understand and some I wouldn't. And that was it because there was no one immediately in the neighborhood where I lived with the same ideals that my parents were trying to instill in me. The few friends that I did make like this girl whose father ran a ~~kosher~~, well it was a fish market and of course that's all they sold there was fish, and I remember they had ^{live} carp and things in the window. I was quite friendly with her and we were in the same class. I wanted to go to the Synagogue with her because that's where she was going, not going to school. That association was sort of broken up. I still remained friends with her, but nothing else. The other relatives had younger children in the Bronx and ~~different~~ ^{other} places ~~where it wasn't~~ ^{which weren't} readily accessible. I remember that my first boy friend was Italian who spoke better Yiddish than I did and could read and write ^{Hebrew} it, and I couldn't. He was two grades ahead

- Y. of me and I was introduced to him by some Jewish boy in my class because he was in his Hebrew class. He went to the religious school because all his friends were Jewish and they all went after school to the religious school to learn ^{Hebrew} Yiddish.
- K. What about virginity. Wasn't the importance of virginity ever discussed in your home?
- Y. No it wasn't. Perhaps it was because in their younger period they were already free thinkers ~~so that perhaps they did not~~ so that there wasn't that hang up.
- K. Did it affect you in any way. What about your first dates. Did it interfere with your - did you ever stop them?
- Y. Well, yes. I wanted to know what the heck did they want because I just wasn't interested. It wasn't anything I seemed to want or need. I didn't find it a problem.
- K. That's very curious. Well, let's get back. Why did you want to be a nurse. Did you ever want to be anything beside a nurse?
- Y. I don't know why. I hadn't been in too many hospitals. When my mother was in a hospital and I ~~would go to~~ ^{couldn't go to} visit her. She was in a hospital in Manhattan and I was going to school in Brooklyn. It was difficult to get there, and she was too sick for the longest while. Then when she came home there was no visiting nurses. Her sister and I had to take care of her. How much the operation cost or didn't, I don't know. There was no medical plan. Maybe that was one of the reasons also that they wanted to get to California; ^{why} when my mother regained her health, they did open up this candy store~~x~~ with this friend so that -
- K. Well, what about your wanting to be a nurse?
- Y. Well, hearing what the nurses had done and how mother had been taken care of by her sister - I had not been in any hospital up to that point. When I heard what the nurses were doing, you know, how they were helping mankind, so I thought that's what I wanted.
- K. What did they want you to be?
- Y. Well, they said if I wanted to be a doctor, if I wanted to be a teacher, but not to be a nurse, ~~they~~ they didn't want their daughter carrying bed pans. That's all they could see a

- Y. nurse doing, carrying bed pans. I knew they did more than that. "What do you know about it?" I said that's what I feel I want to be from what I heard nurses - and perhaps one of my schoolmates was going ^{to be one} and she ^{was} ~~telling~~ me about it. We ^{were} going to graduate the same time. We would go into ^{nursing} ~~nursery~~ school together.
- K. Well, did they ever tell you what they would like to have you be?
- Y. They wanted me to be a teacher. They wanted me to even be a doctor if I wanted to be. There was no thought of me being an attorney or anything. Women attorneys then, they were maybe one in a million, so they didn't think of that part of it. Perhaps if I had been a little older or maybe a little younger, ^{when} I got into the movement and there was need for attorneys perhaps I would have been that, but I didn't see it.
- K. What did they want your brother to be?
- Y. Well, my brother was quite a mathematical genius. They thought that he would do something in the mathematical field. He was a marvelous student and was really as far as math was a child genius and remained one.
- K. When you were young, who influenced you most in your adolescence do you think?
- Y. I really don't know whether it was dad or mother or anyone particular person. There was this whole mish mash of various directions - the Young Workers League, the question of seeing some of the things that were happening ~~in~~, feeling they were not right yet not knowing how to put your finger on it. It wasn't until long afterwards when Ed and I got married, and then in 1927 I had Joyce and ~~I wasn't quite twenty but~~ I was very close to, almost twenty-one, and I remember that before I had her, mother said be sure that you register because when voting times around and you are twenty-one you will be a registered voter. But I was already married when mother told me that, so that was probably a throw back to some of her earlier suffragette work.
- K. Since you didn't know much about sex when you were married was it a shock to you?
- Y. No, it wasn't too much of a shock. By then I'd seen all sorts

- Y. of, even read, saw some pictures that ^{Ed} they had, so that it wasn't too much of a shock - and some of the poetry that was around in those days - so ~~that~~ it wasn't too much of a shock. And Ed was not a virgin, so that he was able to ^{help} overcome ^{any qualms} that, and ~~however I did not have a choice right away. It was years afterwards.~~
- K. During the twenties, it was a permissive ^{era} area, you know women were bobbing their hair and -
- Y. Oh, I bobbed my hair.
- K. What was your attitude toward this?
- Y. I had smoked since I was twelve. I used to sneak cigarettes. By the time I was married I was a two packer. I was smoking openly then.
- K. What did your family feel about companionate marriage and
- Y. They had undergone something like that in 1905 so that there was not that particular hang up there either.
- K. Were you a flapper?
- Y. Oh yes. I bobbed my hair as a young teen ager. Dad cut my hair ~~and~~ one of ~~the~~ customers came in. - I used to wear my hair - I had thirty-two curls down below my ^{juven} shoulders - naturally curly - never put it up in ~~xxxxx~~ rags or anything - ^{when} and this customer came in. Dad was in the middle of bobbing my hair, ~~And~~ he gave my dad a tongue lashing. He said, "butting that beautiful hair - the most beautiful thing that a woman can have." And I didn't know what the heck he was raving about. I wanted my hair cut, and I got it cut. So I started quite young to bob my hair - ~~so that~~ I had my hair bobbed when I even came to California. I was no longer wearing it long.
- K. I see. You were really ahead of your time. When you got your first job did it change your relationship to your family in any way?
- Y. Well, I wasn't there in the store to help them. They had another neighborhood department store in L.A. across the street from the Casper Kahn Hospital on Whittier Boulevard in L.A. where I used to help them out. They had a county library there and I wasn't able to help them that much.
- K. You had your own income then.

- Y. The income wasn't too much, Let's fact~~e~~ it. It was 1923 and I have forgotten what my salary was, but ~~i~~ was very minute, and I think by the time I bought the clothes I had to wear which had to be a little better than the ones on jobs for even office workers in those days because it was in a ~~swank~~ ^{flat} hotel, so that I don't recall wearing the same dress twice. ~~But it was~~ - my mother still made most of my outfits and they were very ~~elegant~~ ^{elegant}.
- K. What did you think about leaving home. Did you ever -
- Y. I didn't leave home until I got married. I didn't leave home when I got a job. I left when I got married.
- K. You never thought of leaving home?
- Y. No. I had a room of my own and so called privacy. My brother had his own room. We had an apartment in the back of the store so if ~~it~~ got busy and we were home dad would call us ^{to help}.
- K. Did your brother help in the store?
- Y. Occasionally. He would be working problems. He also played tennis. He would be in a tennis match -
- K. Did you have much of a relationship with your brother?
- Y. Not too much because he was going to school, and then ~~he~~ went away to Berkeley. That was after I was married though when he went to Berkeley. And he was asked to go into the ^{ast}ronomy department, but he didn't go into that. He didn't even go on for his doctorate. He's ^{done} quite well.
- K. I guess ^{that} ~~that~~'s really enough. It's two hours.

end of tape

Tape three of second series of interviews with E. Yoneda - page 431
3/28/77 - at home of Elaine Black Yoneda, S.F., Calif.

- K. Let's see - I've got these questions in sections. This next section of questions is based on your marriage and your motherhood.
Why did you two decide to get married?
- Y. First of all, since our parents had sent us to the radical movement, then the Young Workers (Communist) League, we were ~~not~~ particularly interested, ^{no} neither one of us in what was happening around ~~them~~, ^{us} and Ed was a machinist who was five years older than I was. Maybe we just decided, ^{to go our own ways,} being contrary to what our parents wanted, to just forego the movement and what it entailed and set up a home of our own. It wasn't much of a home. It was just a furnished room for a while. And then we lived with my parents off and on. At the time I had Joyce, in July of 1927, we were living with my parents who had a store on Botman and Whittier and Ed was driving a milk route. He had decided he didn't want to be a machinist any more. So he had this milk ~~wagon~~ route. And I helped out in the folks store. I helped in the house, ^{too} but mother did most of the main cooking.
- K. Pardon me for a second. What did your parents think of your marrying him?
- Y. Well they weren't too happy about it. Perhaps they knew that he was a drinker. I didn't realize that. Maybe thought he was a little bit too flighty. He was a very handsome man. He had been asked to double for Barrymore later on in some of his films because he was working as a machinist in the film studios. ~~So~~ He was quite a handsome man and had been in the Navy for a while, falsified his age, in the earlier years before I knew him, and had been around. I am sure that I wasn't his first girl.
- K. How did you get married, I mean where?
- Y. At City Hall in L.A. before a judge. We had some court witnesses. We didn't bring anybody else with us. We went home married. As I had indicated earlier I wasn't too happy about the job that I had, working as a secretary,

- Y. because the manager was asking me to be-
- K. Oh, yes. We went into that.
- Y. So that was another thing - my dissatisfaction with the job, and telling the manager you can take your job. I won't go back to business college. I am going to get married.
- K. Let me ask this. Why did you join the Elks?
- Y. Eddie joined it as a fraternal order, and I became what they called an Elquette, the auxiliary. So he joined it and I became - I don't even know if ^{there} it was additional dues, my going to the Elquettes. It was a place where we went bowling, and went to dances, and probably gave him an entrance to some speakeasies. I didn't know that part of it at that time. I found out about the speakeasies ^{later} in the thirties. In twenty-nine and thirty I became ^{later} aware of the different speakeasies around L.A., but I didn't know about that before.
- K. You mentioned that people like Myer came over and left wing people. Did you have a lot of friends among the left wing people?
- Y. Both our sets of parents did. His father, particularly around the labor movement, had been a boomer machinist and having a long history of associating with - in places where there were a lot of workers. With my dad in a barber shop maybe there were just one or two people in the shop with him. Except when he worked in the mines and down in the Waterbury, Connecticut watch factory, In the United States, ~~the~~ other times, there were only one or two people associated closely with him, ~~the~~ workers in his own trade. When he had the neighborhood department stores, or dry goods stores, whatever you want to call it, it wasn't just dry goods stores, it was a mixture of just everything, yardage, shoes, and what have you, there again it was either just run by my mother and father, or they had one or two sales-people.
- K. If you didn't like the movement, why did you keep up with these friends?
- Y. Some of them I enjoyed as individuals. There weren't too many of them that I was in contact or even interested in. Meyer came because he was in, I guess it was the T.U.E.L. or the

- Y. T.U.U.L. So he was ^{to} the director of ~~that~~ and he wanted to get Ed into it. Ed had become a machinist again. So that he went after Ed to join the industrial union, not just a craft union. His father was in it and thought that Meyer could get Ed to come in rather than for him to try, because he had failed before in his attempts to get Ed in the movement. I joined the ILD, as a result of witnessing what happened ~~to~~ the March 6th demonstration.
- K. Yes, we've got that.
- Y. After that, in February of 1931 I went to work for the I.L.D.
- K. We can get to the I.L.D. later. I want to get back to your marriage. You mentioned somewhere along the line that your husband taught you how to iron. What else ^{did} he teach you about housework?
- Y. Not too much because I didn't work for a while. I was working as a salesgirl and things got a little bit depressed and in twentysix I went to work as a salesgirl in what was then the Fifth Street Department Store selling yardage. It wasn't organized - long hours - the pay was very - I don't remember the exact pay, but it was very little. It was fortunate that time that carfare was only a nickle otherwise some of the workers wouldn't be able to ride to work. And the machinists trade at that time was off again on again. New industry was coming that needed a lot of machinists for a lot of work. Perhaps after they set up a factory there wasn't a need for that type of machinist that Ed was.
- K. How did he feel about your going back to work?
- Y. He never objected to it, even when we were living with my folks. After all there was no rent involved. It meant money for other things that he liked to do or I liked to do. It wasn't his pleasure I went to work for. It was also to have some funds for what I wanted to do. As far as clothes, my mother made my clothes for a number of years, and also made all of Joyce's clothes, so we were considered very well dressed.
- K. I'm still trying to get back to why you didn't learn how to iron and keep house and cook from your mother.

Y. I really don't know, but it seems like a good many children of ^{immigrant} ~~parents~~ that I have talked to, that their parents seemed to want to shield them from a hard life if it was possible; not to have to undergo what they went through. They went to work in factories or in the farms when they were eight and ten, and they didn't want that to happen to their ~~daughters~~ children. In retrospect-this isn't anything that I thought ^{about} at the time, and I didn't ^{ask} say, "How come you don't teach me how to bake?" I didn't demand that of my mother. I would rather she baked. I like what she baked. To think that I would ever have to do it or not; I really didn't pay ~~it~~ that much attention. The only thing I can remember is having to keep my own room in order so in case someone came it wouldn't be a shoner ^{da} or a shame for them to walk into where I had my room. That was required of my brother too, that he made his bed. I think, as I say, in retrospect, that it is true of a good many immigrant parents who were oppressed and exploited in their very, very young years, and found the same exploitation going on here, and yet didn't want to expose their children to it.

K. OK. We are on your mother yet. How did you learn about birth control?

Y. I, to this day, am one of those creatures who cannot take a ^{good} many medications or preventative medicines. I react to an awful lot of them. And evidently not knowing what it was ^{I had} in those ~~years~~ ^{I had}, whenever I had an illness or a tooth taken out there were long periods when I was really very low. And what ~~it was~~ ^{was unknown} they didn't know what was causing it ~~so they didn't~~ - So in discussing it I said I wasn't ready for a family, and what are we going to do about it. Well, in the progressive movement the women were a little bit more hep. They knew about Margaret Sanger. I ~~didn't~~ ^{didn't}, and my mother said maybe I could get into a clinic where they -

K. Oh, you did discuss this with your mother?

Y. After I got married, not before, because I didn't want a family at that particular time, so I was given a diaphragm ^{after} based on - I had a physical and everything

- Y. else, ~~was given a diaphragm~~, ^{But} ~~and it proved that I~~ ^{ineffective because}
~~couldn't~~, was one of those who couldn't ^{use} have a diaphragm
~~obviously~~. This is really very personal. I don't know
whether you -
- K. This is part of a feminist tape, and they want to know
what methods of birth control you used, what you knew
about abortions & things like that.
- Y. I couldn't use a diaphragm, and the suggestion was ^{made} ~~that~~
I discuss with Ed that perhaps he could be the one to
use contraceptives. He wasn't very cooperative, and I
did have an abortion before I had Joyce.
- K. Did you object to having an abortion?
- Y. Not necessarily. My mother loaned me the money. She knew
I was going to have it and ~~she~~ didn't seem to be so
shocked. Then I got pregnant again because I tried to
use a diaphragm ^{again but} ~~and it didn't work~~, and Joyce is the
product of that. ~~And~~ ^{She} was born in July of 1927.
- K. In a hospital?
- Y. She was born in the Kaspar Kahn hospital which was
situated across the street from my parents home with
whom we were living at the time. I believe it was May
that my maternal grandmother, who was 72 at the time,
- K. Wait a minute - did you enjoy being pregnant?
- Y. No. Both times that I carried my children the full term I
was very ill. With Joyce I gained ~~three~~ and a half pounds.
For periods I lost weight. I am the type that the minute
I conceive, about twelve hours later I start throwig up.
- K. You know right away then, don't you.
- Y. Yes, I do, and continue almost - with Joyce it was just
about six weeks that I didn't throw up constantly, and then
it was - I gained three and a half pounds during my
pregnancy with her.
- K. It should have made for an easy delivery then.
- Y. It didn't. It made for all kinds of complications. At
seven and a half months I started having labor pains.
I was in the hospital. The doctor wanted to perform a
caesarian. Ed wouldn't sign for it. Why I don't know, and
I was under twenty-one, I couldn't. I guess he had to

Y, consent even if I was twenty-one. Then I was in the hospital several days and went home. And three weeks later again. The same thing happened. Again I was in the hospital, at that time for about forty-eight hours. In the meantime my grandmother came from what was then the Soviet Union. It had been about two years that my parents were trying to bring her over, and my mother's sister who lived in San Diego. Both the daughters wanted to bring their mother here and sent money for her and then one thing and another she didn't come and didn't come. She said she was coming and finally said she couldn't come for a few more months, and she arrived about May of 1927 if I remember correctly. She was very disappointed that I had married a non-Jew. She said she could have stayed in Bolshevik Russia because her other granddaughter had married a non-Jew. And the other granddaughter ^{like} which was my older cousin of the eight children that I told you ^{about earlier} had visited. She was the oldest daughter, and she had become an engineer and married a fellow engineer. And one of her brothers was going to medical school, and another one was in the Red army. It was in 1927, and these were the three of the older cousins. So she could have stayed there - and made certain remarks that the reason she couldn't come when she was supposed to come was the fact that her youngest daughter, who ^{was} had married ^{to} a railroad man, ^{who} had suddenly ^{been} scooped up and sent away to Siberia. So my mother tried to question what it was all about. She'd ^{previously} get a letter from her mother saying that the youngest brother ^{was} going to get married and needs clothing and ^{they} needed that, and then they needed extra money. My aunt and mother would send money. They wondered about it why it was just for the younger sister and the younger brother. What about the older brother and the older sister. But there was no explanation in the letters. They just ^{didn't} couldn't communicate that way. It turns out that when the younger brother got out of the service, and the oldest brother (they were both in the ^{last} red army) Mother's oldest brother was a Bolshevik and was very happy to

Y. revolt and deserted the front and came back to his home village. He was a ~~printer~~ ^{printer} ~~tailor~~ and become what was known as a commissar in that industry. And for a while they had screening of all those who were printers. His younger brother who had no trade also wanted to become a printer. He became an apprentice. And here was his oldest brother going around classifying the different grades of printers. There were four grades. ^{first} There was the ^{married} ~~man~~ man with a family who was a craftsman. The second grade was ~~married~~ without a family. The third grade was a married apprentice. The fourth grade was single. And my youngest uncle, ^{he} found out from my grandmother telling the story. ~~She was telling it~~ in Yiddish, but I ~~had~~ understood, ~~He~~ was disgusted and thought it was a family dishonor that here ~~was~~ his brother who was a commissar for the printing industry ~~had~~ put him in the fourth grade, the lowest grade possible. He wasn't married and he was an apprentice. ~~So~~ he didn't like that -

K. Let's get into your relationship with your husband. What was his attitude toward your role as a wife?

Y. Well his attitude was that when he got home he wanted dinner ready, and the table set -

K. Whether you were working or not?

Y. Whether I ~~was~~ working or not, and we did not have a car. We had one when we first got married but we didn't keep it very long. ~~So~~ we didn't have a car for transportation. We always used public transportation. for a good many years. Then when we both did join the movement in the thirties - he came back into the trade union and I in the ILD - ~~the international defense field~~, and there was an awful lot of work. In the International Labor Defense there was almost daily arrests with the unemployed demonstrations, the evictions, the turning on of gas and putting back furniture for the people who were evicted, going to whatever welfare agencies were available demanding - there were constant arrests and constant running to the jails and putting up bail. It wasn't just an eight hour shift. It was really being on

- Y. call twenty four hours.
- K. What was his reaction to this?
- Y. Well, at times he said, "I thought we were going to see this show", or we were going to go bowling or something. As far as I was concerned the getting out of people who were arrested took precedent over anything ^{else.} But he also had quite a number of meetings, and he participated in the unemployed march that went to Sacramento, the hunger march from L.A. to San Francisco, to Sacramento.
- K. Did you discuss with him how you were going to raise Joyce and what your expectations were for her?
- Y. No. I don't know how many families did or didn't in the late twenties. We were not among those who did. So there was no question of just what we had hopes for her. For a period we had hopes that we would be able to keep food on the table because my salary of ten dollars a week in the I.L.D. certainly wasn't conducive of having too much if it wasn't the fact that for most of that period we did live with my folks. At the time I became active in 1930 we did have our own apartment.
- K. Oh yes. I remember that story about throwing - That's, I think, enough about him then. Now I want to jump into your second marriage. And I want to ask you a personal question. You don't have to answer it if you don't want to. I remember your telling me that when you went up to see about what happened to Meyer and you saw these five Japanese fellows
- Y. Ten.
- K. And you saw these ten Japanese fellows and one of them was Karl
- Y. Whom I didn't know.
- K. Was it love at first sight?
- Y. No, because I wasn't even aware of him being among those who were sitting on that window sill. But I did meet him when I went to work for the I.L.D.
- K. But he was one of the first people you bailed out.
- Y. He was the first.
- K. Did you have any feeling for him then?
- Y. Not as anyone particular, just as
- K. I just wondered. I had a feeling that he came into

- K. your life at the same time that the left wing movement came into your life.
- Y. Actually a year later, practically a year later.
- K. Then this was just coincidental ?
- Y. I didn't pay too much attention although Ed and I had separated for short periods in that time already because his drinking was getting to me, and me still not realizing he was someone who was really quite addicted to alcohol and a little chaser on the side, so he was one who liked to gamble, and there just wasn't the means, so there were a lot of conflicts, not so much about my activity in the movement but the outside interests in quotes that he had that weren't compatible to what I liked. Because if I was a drinker - I don't say I don't like to gamble. I like to go to Tahoe and spend a day there, not just for the view but also to do a little one-armed bandit pulling.
- K. How would you say your second marriage differed from your first marriage?
- Y. The second marriage - first of all when the final with Ed came. This is also very personal. It was Joyce's birthday. It was also the day that the district committee of the International Labor Defense was to have a meeting and since there was going to be a demonstration around that week we had to mobilize our forces. One of the things we discussed at the district committee was to see who would not go to the demonstration, but would be available at a phone where people could call who were arrested and beaten up so that the bail money would be available. To take her to a demonstration you might not only jeopardize your own being but you might jeopardize the funds, so we had to set up - some of the language you hear in the papers now and on TV - a command post in key positions so they could call up and say "At First and Main they ^{cops} beat up and there are ten arrested. Among them is so-and-so." And you could get a line on what ^{the} bail ^{might be} they are asking. We had monthly meetings anyway whether demonstrations were planned or not. The headquarters had been raided quite a number of times, so we began meeting in private homes.

- Y. And it was at our home that we were meeting when Ed came in and
- K. Oh, yes. You told me that
- Y. So that was the final straw. Karl was one of the District Committee members so ~~that~~ he ~~could~~ ^{saw} see how I would react in a certain situation, and it would be no surprise. He was one of those there. He was on the Labor Defender. That was the magazine the I.L.D. put out. He was what was known as the Labor Defender agent who got the subscriptions and saw that those who had bundles got bundles and as well being active in the Japanese Branch of the I.L.D. He had been a member of the I.L.D., not since it was organized, because in '25 when it was first organized he wasn't here. So that he was an early member of the I.L.D., ^{on} ~~but~~ different committees, and - so that he was there in the house when I tossed Ed out. He was also present that Christmas when the I.L.D. was having a big bazaar and show at a theatre on, I think it was on Broadway near First, there was a - ~~had been~~ a theatre that was rented out for bazaars and other things, and private shows. The I.L.D. was having a bazaar. It was a Christmas Mart where we raised money for political prisoners. And Ed came in from Las Vegas, and he begged me to come back. He said he would even become a machinist in the Soviet Union if we wanted to get away from everything. He knew they needed machinists and he would go there with me if I would come back to him. I told him I had heard too many stories in all the previous years of what he would or wouldn't do. And I said no, I think it's ^{the} at an end and ^{asked if} ~~was he going to go~~ ^{to} and see Joyce who was at my mother's. ^{He answered} ~~And~~ maybe he would. I found out afterwards that he had a woman in the car. He had a car by then because he was working at Las Vegas on the Hoover Dam. And he worked there for a number of years as a foreman and ^{earned} ~~had~~ a very good salary.
- K. Let's get back to Karl.
- Y. So that he was there also. He knew that Ed was there.

- Y. I think it was right after that that Karl and I got to see each other and discuss what would an inter-marriage bring about. And several comrades had inter-married. A couple of them were black and white, others were Japanese.
- K. What about the cultural differences. Did they make any problems for either of you?
- Y. They didn't. Because actually as far as cultural differences, Karl at an early age realized that the workers had a different type of culture than those ~~with the~~ tea ceremonies and flower arrangements; that there was more to Japanese culture than just that.

Tape three of second series - side two

Counter #1

- K. You mentioned Karl's family. Did you have any problems with them?
- Y. Well he had two first cousins with the same last name as his. Neither one of them ever in the movement, but neither one of them disowning him as such because ~~we were married by then~~ ^{and two brother-in-laws} ~~we were married by then~~. I never ^{had} met ^{the latter two} them, but I understand that after I came up here (I came up in April of thirty-three) they had what they called a family conference. His male cousins didn't want to come to it. It is usually the head male of the family who calls a conference. And his sisters, his immediate family, since his mother lived in Japan the two brother-in-laws called it. And the sisters came from (I have forgotten where they lived ^{one} near Pasadena) ~~the other sister at the time~~, and they had this family conference, and Karl went. I wasn't there. I was already here, and I understand that the offer to him was that they would make arrangements for him to marry a nice Japanese girl, as they put it, and see that he got five thousand dollars in cash, a car, and send him to university, because they knew he always wanted to be a student, but there were two provisions. One was that he had nothing to do with this white woman, this divorcee with a child; and the other ^{one} was to give up the movement. And he said, "Well, since I won't give

Y, up the movement I don't have to give up the white woman." So that's the story that he tells. I am sure it is true because I have heard afterwards, you know, the scuttlebutt about them having this conference. Then they threatened that they would write to his mother what a disgrace he was bringing on the family. He had come out of jail. He had done ninety days for disturbing the peace on that arrest in February of thirty ^{one} ~~two~~, of at the end of thirty one because there were long periods before ^{the} trials and there were so many of them, and quite a number of serious charges too, not just disturbing the peace. Immigration charges, or whatever it was called. And by that time I had been arrested in the Philharmonic riot, as it was called, and defended myself in court. Karl says he particularly remembers me as a defendant in that trial, that I made a very ^{big} ~~good~~ impact on him defending myself, knowing that I had never been - although I had appeared as a witness earlier ^{on trial before}. So that made a tremendous impact. As far as I know he may even have written some poetry that appeared in the Japanese press. But I don't read Japanese to this day so I don't know what he wrote or didn't write. And so whether he was in love with me from the start is something else again. I don't know. We have never discussed it.

Then we came up to San Francisco in -

K. We got that story.

Did Joyce accept him?

Y. Well Joyce knew him having met him at home and at different affairs. I don't believe she accepted him. She kept wanting her dad - when is her dad coming - and I kept saying

K. How did your relationship with Karl differ from your relationship with ~~my~~ your first husband?

Y. Just before Ed and I separated I had another abortion. I wasn't ready to have another child, and was quite sick ~~then~~. But fortunately springing out and was able to

- Y. resume ^{work} after a month¹⁵ of convalescence, and get back to work. I was very frank with Karl and told him that I had this condition and the doctors had suggested that the male member of the family take precautions. And Karl said he wouldn't mind if that would keep us together, yes. I am jumping ahead of the story of what happened to us - then we got to thinking after about three years that maybe we should have a family of our own. Joyce was still with my parents because, I don't know whether I have gotten into that, my understanding with Ed -
- K. Yes. We went into that. I want to ask another question. Did you have to go to the Party to get permission to have a child?
- Y. No. At the time I went to work I looked very young. I was about twenty four and some of the people thought I was only sixteen. And Ida Rothstein, who was then the organizer for the I.L.D., said that she had quite a number of kickbacks from people in the party as well as the I.L.D. district council, how come she hired someone so inexperienced and so young to be in charge of the office. And she said, "Look, she's got a three-year old." and she didn't get married in Tennessee so she's not a child bride. So that - she's in her twenties. She is a trained office worker, and we need a trained office worker as well as someone who can speak the language and who isn't scared when someone unknown walks in, and isn't scared to go into a police station and post bail and ask for some reports on who was arrested." So that got over that. When I joined the party some said, "Oh, you've got a child!" So I said, "I had it before I joined the movement."
- K. How did you decide to have Tommy?
- Y. For three years we tried before I got pregnant, so I didn't discuss with anybody whether I should in fact at one point I protested something the party had planned around a certain campaign. Darcy ^{who} was then district organizer said I was around the Hall of Justice too much

Y. and had the thinking of the police department and maybe it would be a good thing if I went home for a while and maybe have a baby. I said, "I'll have a baby when I want to have it. "

K. How were decisions made as to how you would raise Tommy?

Y. When he was five weeks old he turned out to be full of allergies. When I became pregnant with Tommy I was nauseated within forty eight hours and had just come back from a horrendous week end up in GrassValley where there was a strike of gold miners. There was no means of transportation unless you had a car. Yet I knew I should be there. So I looked around for transportation with a union organizer or attorney. When I realized I was pregnant Karl was secretary of the Alaska Cannery Workers Union and had been elected to go to Alaska during the canning season. We had discussed that we should postpone our attempts at parenthood until he got back from Alaska before we thought of a family again. Joyce was living with us. So we half way came to an agreement that we would stop trying. Then it happened.

K. Did either you or Karl talk about him, not being president of course, but what were your expectations for Tommy?

Y. When Karl comes back I will show you the little birth announcement we had. We happen to have two copies of it. It might be of interest to you what we said about him.

K. OK, I'll make a xerox of it.

K. What were your expectations for Joyce?

Y. Well, Joyce turned out to be someone who was very articulate.

- Y. She had great talent had it been followed through. In fact at ten she was going to have a scholarship at the art center. I have forgotten where it was here in San Francisco. Of course the teacher had recommended her.
- K. Did you want her to be an artist?
- Y. If that's what she wanted, yes. It didn't make no never mind to me if that's what she wanted. If she wanted to be a nurse I would say yes. She was all of ten then. I didn't have any plans.
- K. Did you and Karl ever discuss what you'd like to see Tommy become?
- Y. Well, when he was born in thirty nine it was right after Mooney had been released and there had been this victory for the labor movement that took so many years for fruition, that perhaps by the time he grows up there wouldn't be ^{any one} tossed in jail for speaking on the street corner or having demonstrations for the release of this labor leader or that labor leader. Perhaps if he had any talent he would be a teacher among the laborers, and so on. Maybe he would be a labor organizer, or what have you. Certainly not anyone who would be for war or be for imperialism and we hoped that when he grew up he would be on ^{the} side of the masses ~~of the people~~ regardless of race, color or religion.

Also we ~~had~~ discussed his learning Japanese. Although I had never learned to read or write Yiddish I spoke it, and he should know at least how to speak ^{Japanese} that, ~~and not try to use it as a means of hiding things from~~ - Also we discussed that maybe now ~~that~~ ^{he} Tommy when he grows up would go to Japanese school, and maybe at that time I could learn the language because my ~~hesitancy~~ ^{hesitation} and rational for not learning the Japanese language ~~was~~ ^{had} to do with Karl's activities. I didn't want to know what he was doing, so I really did not attempt to find out what was going on. I thought that if the red squad arrested ~~me~~ ^{him} I wouldn't know my strength if they started questioning me about what he was doing. Even when I was first on the witness stand they started asking me about Ed, and ^{though} I didn't know the rules and regulations of court, ~~and~~ I said, "If you want to ^{know about} ~~question~~ him, why don't you subpoena him and question him?" That was my tendency,

Y. but under extreme torture, and having heard some of the tales that were coming out of Germany and other fascist countries, I didn't know the strength I would or wouldn't have if I knew what they were discussing. And some of it was underground work, sending material back to Japan in the Japanese language. Karl helped set up, helped ~~perhaps~~ with some of the stores, and helped perhaps to see that it got over to Japan. So that I didn't want to know this. I was going to learn Japanese along with Tommy, that was our plan.

K. Did either of you learn it? You didn't, did Tommy?

Y. No. When Tommy was just two and a half, which was in forty one, we put him in the Morning Star, I believe it was, nursery school which was run by the Maryknoll fathers and sisters and was conducted in Japanese. We put him in that school so that he would learn Japanese, but the first thing he came home with, he mumbled a couple of prayers. We asked him what else did he learn. Did he learn how to say good morning or anything. No, he hadn't gotten to it, just prayers before you eat, and we thought maybe when he gets a little older he'll learn more things. And we were a little disappointed that that's all they were teaching him, religion, but ~~thing~~ being a religious school, there was no other nursery school except some religious sect, whether it was Bhuddist or Catholic or what have you, so we thought where would be a certain amount of that we would have to sort of shut our eyes to. But he was in school only until December 5th because December 7th came and there were no more Japanese language schools, so that he didn't learn much as far as the language went and I learned nothing at that time.

I wanted to come back to the family thing. They wrote to Karl's mother. I did not meet his mother personally until 1960, so all I knew was from her letters which Karl ~~were~~ translated. And the sisters and the brother in laws did write a letter to his mother that here her son was taking up with a white divorcee who had a child and been in jail, and although he was using the name Hama the people know he was related to them, and what could she do

Y. about it. I learned to admire and respect his mother when a letter came from Hiroshima, and it didn't come to the sisters. They probably wouldn't have sent it on to us if it came. It was addressed to Karl and to "my dear children" received yours(and Karl was wondering what she was talking about. He hadn't written to her for quite a while) - in which you complain about what my son is doing. If that makes him happy it will make me happy, and I hope and pray to Buddha and God (she always prays to both of them to cover all bases) in case Karl had become a Christian and just didn't believe in prayers to Buddha, that there would be issue. And since the letter was addressed to my dear children Karl sent it on to his sisters. He never did get it back, so that isn't one of the letters that we have that she sent, and we have very little of what she sent us in the thirties. We have after the war some of her letters. But that was her attitude. And here is a woman who had gone back to Japan in 1914, had a very hard life here; had seen her oldest son die at six (Karl had an older brother) and nursed a sick husband for a year after she got back, and then had to raise the three children by herself, and helped Karl leave Japan after he had been drafted in the imperial army (the Emperor's army) since he didn't want to serve. So that she was a woman of great strength. Karl always told me that, but I didn't know just what her strength would be. To have her write such a letter in thirty three you can imagine that she was a woman that had wide horizons. And every time she wrote she wanted to know was there a child on the way. Of course her prayers were that it would be male, because it is the tradition of a male, the head of the household, taking over you know. It was very strong and still is strong. It isn't just the Japanese, it is the Chinese, the Italians, they want their oldest to be a son. So after, of course, December 7th, on the 8th, (I don't know whether I told you this or not) there was a knock on our door.

K. Oh, yes, I got into that.

K. I do want to find out this, though. How did you raise your children, both Joyce and Tommy, to know what you were doing and why you were doing it?

- Y. We would take them to meetings. We very seldom had baby sitters for either one of them. We didn't take them to demonstrations where we thought there might be any violence on the part of the police starting - (it was never the people who called the demonstration who started the violence) and possibility of arrest. I was in jail in 1935. I don't know whether I told you this or not. Mother had Joyce when I was in jail. It was during the hunger strike. I don't know whether I went into that or not.
- K. I don't think you did.
- Y. There was a hunger strike -
- K. You went into the hunger strike, but not Joyce being up here.
- Y. Well, Joyce came up the day I was bailed out. Mother is the one who came and told me I was going to be let out. They didn't let Joyce come back to the - I think she was sitting there drawing. She was always drawing, and she was very good at it. And one of the officers said, "Oh, you've got a jailbird for a mother." She said, "she's no jailbird. She's a worker. She working for you. You are a worke r too if you don't know it." And the officer told me about it. He said "You've got some feisty daughter there." I said She is not just feisty. She understands that there are classes, and she understands that you are not part of the ruling class." That was part of my rapport with her. And they stayed just a few days and mother ~~xxxx~~ went ~~xxx~~ back to L.A. I was bailed out, and she didn't come to court. I don't recall her ever coming to court when I was there. She was in school unless it was summer, and in thirty seven Ed did - I went back for a National Convention. Every Easter holiday, every Christmas Holiday after she came to live with us we, even if we had to borrow the money - =
- K. Oh, yes. We went into that.
- Y. And then Ed suddenly came here when she was ten years old -
- K. Yes. We've got that.
- Y. And then her reaction was that she believed what he told her; that I had said nothing; that he wasn't to see her for five years and that was why he didn't see her.

K. What about Tommy? How did he react? Growing up?

Y. He was very allergic, so there was an awful lot of going to doctors in his early life, and I think he remembers more of that. Also, when we got out of Manzanar, the following year he spent eight and a half months in the Stanford Convalescent Hospital, so that I was commuting seven days a week during that period. Dr. Wolf said he would have to be in about three and a half months, not only for his allergies, they also suspected rheumatic fever. He spent three weeks in the French Hospital, and then he said he should to go the convalescent home. Arrangements were made. I had to go through a financial test - how much I was getting. Karl was a private (no he was a sergeant then) whatever it was, I was still getting about eighty-three dollars a month for the child and my own support. And although I was working at a U.E. office [United Electrical Workers] over in Oakland, my salary was about seventy five cents an hour at that time - an office manager with about three and a half people under me. But that what it was and that's what I was getting.

K. When he got better, how did he react to you and Karl being so radical?

Y. Karl was overseas.

K. I mean, when he was older.

Y. We did live in Sonoma County for thirteen years and he, whenever there was a meeting like when the Progressive Party got on the ballot, we would get signatures in Sonoma County. He would go with us. When Paul Robeson came during the campaign and we raised funds, he was sort of overwhelmed when I took him to where Paul was, Paul said "This must be Tom Mooney." This tremendous memory that this man had. There was something similar in forty three when he was playing Othello here and I went backstage, and he said "Karl just looked beautiful in that uniform," so proud to be able to fight the fascists instead of staying behind barbed wire. The warmth of that man, as small as Tom was it went through to him. And when there were I.L.W.U. Conventions, even though Karl was on leave, we would go into the City and attend on weekends, ^{Tom would come with} some of us, and sometimes right

Y. after school he would go with us, and he met many men and women who were active in the labor movement and he never said, "How come?" There was no actual youth organization we could send him to, he was too young. When he was eleven the McCarthy era started and some of our friends that we had met he didn't see any more, and he wanted to know what had happened to so and so, and why are they not in San Francisco any more, not in Los Angeles any more when we go down to visit. He asked. ~~So~~ All this red-baiting that is going on, does it mean that I am going to have to go in ^{to} another camp? because my other grandparents came from Russia? ~~So he must have had~~ He was very upset in the sixth grade when his teacher ~~asked him~~, told the class she was very upset that McArthur had been tossed out by Truman and that they write something about it in the Civics class. He said, "I got up in class and said, 'Mc Arthur isn't all that great. He took a lot of credit for other men that died,'" and had an argument with her, and then wrote his paper on McArthur got what he deserved. So he knew we were anti-Korean war, and he was anti all war. ~~So that~~ While in school, when we first moved to Sonoma County his ^{second} ~~first~~ grade teacher called me and said that Tommy might have some difficulty because of his Japanese ancestry, in Sonoma County ~~xxxxxx~~ ^{the Japanese} church had been burned down during evacuation.

K. The Japanese Church?

Y. Yes, the Japanese ^{Buddhist} church, and other acts of vandalism throughout the county and they are not being well received yet, he might have some difficulty. And I turned to her and said, "From what I understand he is likely to have more difficulty because of his Jewish ancestry because the mountain ~~where~~ we look out ^{to} from our ranch ^{window} was where the swastika was etched into its rock - a great big swastika, and the head of the bund who was ^{an alien} ~~illegally~~ was working as a baker in Petaluma, ~~so that he might have~~, and there were still some families right in Penn Grove who were Nazis, because he ^[Tommy] told me about going ^{to} ~~some place~~ ^{home} and seeing this Nazi flag over the fireplace. I said he

- Y. is more liable to have difficulty because of his Jewish ancestry.
- K. What did the teacher say?
- Y. I said "I think he can handle himself in both instances."

He came back and told of an incident where one of his best friends was making remarks (he didn't say Blacks at that time, ~~he didn't use the term Blacks~~, but Negroes) and one of the mother's said, "If you don't behave the N----r boogey man's going to get you", and he said he doesn't understand why they are saying those things - why? I said it was the same way people say the Jews are all rotten or the Japanese are all rotten, and we know there is good and bad in all people regardless of their color.

In regard to religion, he started going out in high school with a girl, and he went to Sunday School with her. We didn't object. If that's what he wanted, you know. But he was always a very good student.

When it came time for awards in Sonoma County we had some funny incidents. B'nai B'rith in Petaluma usually gives an award (I don't know whether they still do or not) to the outstanding athlete in Petaluma High School. And they asked the principal and the coach to submit names. The name that came up most in 1957 was Tom who ~~by~~ then was an outstanding football and basketball, despite his allergies, and track, a three letter man, student body president, All A's.

- K. You raised a genius!
- Y. I don't know. I sometimes wonder whether it isn't putting too much ^a burden on them when they have all those things presumably going for them and they don't see other facets of it. So his name came up and some of the Board tried to say, well we don't particularly give it to a Jewish boy. He suddenly became a Jewish boy. You know, we try to go outside to show that we don't ~~care~~ ^{discriminate}, but he isn't altogether actually Jewish, ~~and~~ should they give him the award? They had this meeting with three, the principal, the coach and I have forgotten -

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3/28/77 - at home of Elaine Black Yoneda, S.F. Calif.

K. So you said he did get the B'nai Brith award?

Y. He did get the B'nai B'rith award. It was held at the Jewish community center. They usually brought in an outstanding famous international star to present the award. It is not mandatory, it is a fact. And they had a big banquet. The B'nai B'rith ~~at that time~~ brought in Bill Russell, the outstanding basketball player. (He was in Hawaii at the time) to come and present the award to Tommy. At that time there was quite a schism in the Jewish community, some called left wingers, the others real right wingers, and some of them wondered how come we could go to the Jewish community center when they are so anti-progressive, anti-labor most of them. I think most of them came from backgrounds having been needle trades workers or something. I never went too much into that. I have never been in just a strictly Jewish organization in my whole life, and I did not know all the machinations and what have you. I said, "Look, just like some of you ask me why I belong to the P.T.A. when I have to go to movement meetings. My child is there, and it concerns his welfare as well as other children. I am interested in seeing how children are treated and what they give them. So I go to P.T. A. meetings. I do go to football games because I enjoy them, and I enjoy basketball games even better, so that I went to as many as I could throughout the county. I enjoyed the Labor School, so I tried to organize a branch of the California Labor School in Sonoma County. I helped organize that and attended classes. I go to as many as I can and if I don't want to I don't go, whether it is movement or not.

K. This is getting into another section that I was interested in about your radicalization. So why don't we go into that now.

- K. What I would like to know is you said you joined the I.L.D. and later on you joined the party. Well, what was your relationship to the communist party after you joined?
- XX I mean, how did they determine what you should do?
- Y. I was in the International Labor Defense, and had been for- I joined the International Labor Defense in April of 1930, and became a witness in that March 6th - ^{Hydes}Hydes, in the trial where I testified, said I ~~was~~ was a communist and and got instructions from Moscow. He said under oath that I was a well-known communist. I ~~was not~~ was not a member of the Communist Party. I knew some communists, including my father-in-law. I didn't even at that time know that my folks were in the party. Why didn't they
- K. ~~When did they~~ tell you?
- Y. Well, they didn't discuss everything that they were into, and it wasn't until years afterwards, I might say in the forties, that I knew they had been charter members and for a period they weren't in, but they were still friendly and supportive of the movement. And they belonged mostly to the Jewish segment of it, so they probably just didn't discuss it with me because I wasn't in that segment.
- K. Well, I have heard so much about party discipline. When you joined the party did they determine that you should stay in the I.L.D.?
- Y. As far as I know there was never any question raised whether or not I would stay in I.L.D. I guess that was my function and - maybe if I wasn't working out they might have said now look you had better go and learn how to be a needle pusher or something. They may have, but evidently I was doing a job, I don't say it was outstanding, but it was a job that was ^{help}helping trying to preserve civil rights, enhancing and making our Bill of Rights and the Constitution really meaningful instead of being violated by the powers that be.
- K. There is another question then I wanted to ask you about. I know that the party really concentrated on what they called basic workers and Ed was a machinist and you were an office worker or worked in stores. Yet they sent you to the party school above Ed, and you said Ed sort of resented that. Why did they send you instead of Eddie?

Y. Perhaps by that time some of the other^s had seen his actions when he was in the cups, and they may have found out - I don't say he was dishonest, but if he had a buck in his pocket it didn't matter whose it was if he wanted to have a drink. So there was an irresponsibility as ^{well} ~~far~~ as. I really never discussed it. I was asked if I could go, and there had been discussion, there had been others. And also perhaps at that time he had a job, and there may have been discussion around that too. It might have been the job - there was family responsibility. But we were still living with my folks at that time. Once we moved back there in the late thirties we lived there until we split as the word is now. It isn't the word that we used then. So it may have been the whole factor of that, and also perhaps they didn't have (I don't know what the proportion of women students were). I really don't remember too much about that month I was up in San Francisco to the school, maybe because I was too much involved with what might be happening in my own life because as I say it was off again on again with Ed, more than once, and he had joined the T.U.U.L. and there was also the Sports Club and he was helping with that. And something came up and I told one of the young girls in the Sports Club of the Y.C.L.L. [Young Communist League] ~~xxxxxxx~~ that I don't think Ed and I are going to stay together, and she burst out in tears, "How can you - such an ideal couple?" I said we may be on the surface ~~xxxxxx~~ but there are things in life that when you grow up you find out that they aren't what they appear to be. So that was one of the experiences that I had. But I went and came back and continued in the International Labor Defense. When I asked for a transfer to come up to San Francisco it was granted, and also to work for the International Labor Defense. It was the same Party district, but it was another district of the

Y. ILD, and now there ~~is~~ ^{are} two separate ^{party} districts ^{in the state}.

K. I am going to have to find out a lot more about the I.L.D., but we'll do that after we find out about the Party. Now, I am going to ask some questions here, and if you do 't want to answer them, just say you aren't interested in answering because I don't really know how you feel about this. Did you always agree with party policies?

Y. No. As I told you that one of my arguments was with then the head of the Communist Party, Darcy, on how they were handling a certain petition campaign, and I was told that I had been around cops too long and getting their mentality, and perhaps I ought to become a housewife for a while.

K. Did he say that seriously?

Y. I don't know. It was just in saying that-I was pointing out that the party made a gross mistake, and I may as well go into what it was. It afterwards turned into a perjury case against Louise Todd and Anita Whitney and others.

K. Yes, do.

Y. In fact, when the reign of terror started.

K. In the 1934 strike you mean.

Y. Yes, in the 34 strike I was down at the party headquarters at 37 Grove to try and ^{and see someone} protest certain to statements that had been made at my party club meeting the day before by a person that was under suspicion as being an agent but was in leadership of the club, and I was sort of keeping my ears and eyes open (I have forgotten even the name of the club that I was in at that time. It was so far back and so many things happened). I came to headquarters and Alex Noral was there but no one else was there, and wanted to know what was happening and why those instructions went out that all those who were citizens were to report and take petitions at a certain hour to the City Hall, and wanted to know why all those who were citizens were ordered, whether

- Y. they got signatures or not, to report, and protested the method. I said "Why can't we take our own petitions?" He said, "Oh, no that's just a technicality that everybody's going to overlook." I sometimes hear this today, not from people in the movement, but they have a petition for a - for a proposition, whatever it is, L, M, or whatever, and I have to sign, and I look at this person and say, "Are you going to turn this in yourself or are you going to take it to - and they will say, "Oh, no". And I will ask, "Do you live here in the City?" A couple of them I knew did not live in the City, and the propositions that some of the labor Unions were passing, so there is this tendency of - oh those are technicalities to be overlooked, because you are supposed to take your own petition. People's don't realize that that's a technicality just like they got Al Capone for income tax violation and not the murders he committed. This is one of the technicalities that they can use against a legal petition campaign by having someone, ^{other than} because of the stress of time, legitimately gotten. Now I think they have more of - some of the laws are more repressive. It used to be within the county. The last campaign, I understand, if you lived in Santa Cruz, that if you were going into the City proper of Santa Cruz you also had to be a resident of Santa Cruz. Like Fremont, you had to be right in that county, which is a little more repressive in having the county, not the state.
- K. So they just ignored you -
- Y. They ignored me, yes, because there wasn't, in the stress of time, just a few went with the petitions, and not every one of us who had had petitions out to take our own petitions. So those ~~that~~ were some of the errors that were committed in the name of

- Y. expediency, and ~~xxxxxxxx~~ which I am sure that almost every petition campaign violates, but the ones that they would harass would be those connected with the communist party or any of the progressive forces or trade unions.
- K. There are a lot of things that happened during that period like the Teheran policy, or the War in Spain, but I can't ask you all these questions, but will ask you a couple. What about the boycott of Japanese goods?
- Y. Karl and I were very active in that campaign, and the Japanese Branch of the International Labor Defense was very active in it. The progressive Japanese, the agricultural workers who had been or were in the agricultural unions or in the canneries were all active. Karl who was by then a Longshoreman became a picket captain for the picket line the longshoremen had when they picketed the ships carrying scrap to Japan. To show you that the imperialist forces don't recognize color when it is to their profit -
- K. Yes. You told me that.
- Y. So you see at that time it makes no never mind. When it comes to others they divide and rule and say you don't have anything to do with him. He's quote, unquote, a Jap, or he's Black, or so, when it is to their profit. But I was active in that picket line.
- K. Did you wear lisle stockings?
- Y. Oh, yes. I gave up my silk stockings, wore lisle stockings and, I never wore silk underwear much. When I was young I had silk underwear, camisoles and those things. I think I've still got some left just to show some day.
- K. What about some key things. How did you feel about the Soviet invasion of Finland?
- Y. I did not pay too much attention to that phase as there was still an awful lot of activity in

- Y. getting men and women out of jail, and Tommy was small. At five weeks old he became allergic and it was a whole new way of life for me too having to run to clinics two and three times a week, so that I didn't pay too much attention to that. I also felt that we are not on the scene and we don't know what's happening there. Finland was under a semi fascism or outright fascist regime at that time.
- K. I was thinking of certain key things that really raised hell. What about the Nazi-Soviet non-aggression pact then? That really created a furor.
- Y. Among some people, but I think my own personal direction at that time was more centered on what was happening to Japan, to those who were anti-war and anti-fascist. And the jails were full. Through the International Red Aid we were getting material on what was happening to these men and women in Japanese jails. We were getting information on what was happening in Germany. And the outright alliance of the Japanese militarists with the fascists, becoming part of the Axis. Our attention, personally, looking back, was more directed in that area, and raising funds to help the Chinese fight the Japanese. And there were others who were raising funds to help the Japanese militarists. Perhaps if I was still living in L.A. with my folks being there we might have discussed more of what it meant, or what it didn't mean. But frankly, primarily the fact of Tommy's illness did sort of stem my activities. The only time I was really very active was when those ^{two} were arrested and I needed to post bail. I wasn't doing as much, although I ran for office in 1939 for the Board of Supervisors. I don't know whether you saw that card.
- K. Yes. As a matter of fact you gave me one.
- Y. That also took up as much of my spare time as possible. My thrust was mainly in trying to fight violations of the Bill of Rights and the Constitution,

- Y. and for the rights of workers to organize, and also the rights of other people to fight for their rights.
- K. Well, then I won't even ask you about the Nazi invasion of the Soviet Union, or maybe I'd better because you had relatives over there. Here's what I want to you - you were probabely, I shouldn't make assumptions, but you obviously -
- Y. Yes, The "The Yanks were not coming" - I participated in some of the meetings that were held -
- K. Then all of a sudden it becomes a "just war" - what was your reaction to this?
- Y. Well, I felt that the Soviet Union, that all the imperialists would join hands and try once and for all to drown her. You remember the papers of the day - oh she's only going to exist six weeks. And my hopes were no, that she was never going to be overthrown, and would remain the country of the people rather than the Czar's, and the outright imperialists. I don't know whether that was it or not, but I was hoping that she would not, and therefore turned my attention to help raise the - and asking for a second front.
- K. Now, you were in the party all during this period, what was your feeling about the dissolution of the Communist International, and the formation of the Communist Political Association.
- Y. I ~~wasn't~~ in the party all the time because while - there was a period when those of Japanese ancestry were suspended from the party and those who were with Japanese, who had Japanese spouses, male or female, were also suspended.
- K. What did you feel about that?
- Y. Well, there were quite a number of tears, and most of us were rather horrified of the fact that regardless of the long years that we had been in there, but Browder's edict was that all these of Japanese ancestry, and by then those who were aliens had

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Y. dropped by the wayside because of the registration, but remained sympathetic with the movement but were no longer members. They were aliens because part of the questions (this didn't just go for Japanese, it was for aliens) who were in the party and were known as aliens. So they were registered and were automatically out, but they remained sympathizers. And the same was true with the Japanese.

K. There is a little difference there.

Y. You see his premise was that the party would be a very good place for fifth columnists to hide under the guise of being party members and anti-fascists because that was the position of the party. As it turned out there was a young man of Japanese ancestry who was in the rather high ranks of the party who did become a witness against some of those who had been in the party, and other people who knew him better than we did, to this day - in fact one man accused him of being an agent in thirty eight yet. So you see that - some of the things point to that - some of the documents that we have seen in the Japanese language papers. Of course I don't read Japanese but the translations I've seen do prove that there was, that were were an agent or two in the Japanese ranks that were reporting to the Japanese police what they were doing here. So one or two wouldn't have made that much difference. Then perhaps some other thinking too was that if you were, the party gave a leave of absence to all those who were drafted in the military. There was no question when I got out of camp that I was a member. I started going to party meetings. And the same happened to Karl when he got out of the service. There was no question about him attending party meetings or having to go through any [laughter] brainwashing so that our actions, for instance, in camp where

- Y. we circulated a petition and sent it to the President that the second front be opened, that Japanese men and women, those of Japanese ancestry who wanted to enlist should be allowed to enlist, and that their abilities be used in any front, whether it is the Pacific or the European front to fight the fascist axis. So we continued those activities in camp. We got absentee ballots and voted.
- K. Good for you.
- Y. And we also bought the first war savings stamps, when the money came through, so it was a mixed bag. But I don't say we wouldn't repeat our support in fighting against a fascist axis. That was a prime thing. It wasn't so much as a fighting for just the United States. It was fighting fascism which was the worst enemy of all peoples.
- K. I don't know where this question would fit it, so I'll just ask it now. What was your reaction to the dropping of the atom bomb, and I am thinking of you particularly because Karl's mother was in Hiroshima.
- Y. None of us, I think, even the scientists who worked on it, knew what kind of course it had. I know now (I didn't know then). Karl knew then, being in army intelligence, that there were secret meetings going on in Moscow who was not at war with Japan yet ~~because~~ that came later, that between U.S. personnel and Japanese personnel as to how best to end the war and save face long before the atom bomb was dropped because Japan was losing the war. So that the fairy tale we are told to this day that it saved so many American lives is a fairy tale. We would have saved many more maybe by ~~not, and~~ bringing those negotiations to a fruitful end, and signing the declaration of surrender sooner, because Japan had lost ^{part in China, India, Iwo Jima etc.} and Germany had lost and ^{Italy} an India had lost and China had lost and Iwo Jima had lost, and

Y. ~~had lost all over.~~ The Phillipines were re-taken, so that ~~she~~ ^{Japan} had lost on all fronts. People in Japan were starving. Many of the cities had been bombed long before, ^{the A bomb was dropped}

K. Well, immediately, though on the bomb's dropping.

Y. We weren't told immediately of how many casualties there were. To this day we are told that there were 70,000 casualties, but the 70,000 [phone rings]

K. Well, I have a couple of more questions - Did being a member of the party affect your thinking on women's role in society in any way?

Y. Yes. Because one of the first things I heard about was male chauvinism, and in the International Labor Defense there were quite a number of women in leadership, and whenever we heard of a woman attorney we tried to find out what her persuasion was and perhaps we could have her become an I.L.D. attorney. There were no women on the ~~Western~~ Coast, but there were several on the East Coast like Carol King and a few others, Yetta Land, but we did not have any Portias here, unfortunately because I think that sometimes there is a little bit more warmth emanates from a woman, not just the woman's question but the overall question. And also read some of the writings of Engels, and some Marx and some Lenin on the women question - not in great depth. I am not a scholar per se being able to say now on page so-and-so so and so said this. I can sort of absorb the overall thing without pinpointing, although I was able to quote the Bill of Rights word for word for a long time. I always carried a copy of it in my purse.

K. What did you think about women leaders like Rosa Luxemburg and Clara Zeitkin?

Y. They were, of course, outstanding examples of women, and Mother Jones. Gurley Flynn I had the pleasure and honor of meeting, having entertained her in my home. And Anita Whitney. Although I had met Bloor without knowing who she was, in the recent forties I got to know her

Y. quite well and was on the same platform with her so that it was quite an honor to meet women who had so many years of struggle and continued in the struggle.

End of side one

Beginning of side two - fourth tape of second series - Elaine Black Yoneda

Counter #1

K. Did the party have any policy, I mean how did it affect you on marriage, being in the party. Did it affect your approach toward marriage?

Y. Karl and I, as I said, lived together and didn't think too much about it, but when in nineteen thirty five, and there was no question, were we legally married - how come?

K. Yes, I remember that story. What I meant was your relationship with your husband, did the party policies make any difference?

Y. While my relations were with the I.L.D., Karl's mainly were in the Japanese field which I did not understand. So therefore if there might have been any conflict I wasn't aware of it. And I am sure - of course there was a Japanese branch of the I.L.D. which conducted it's business in Japanese primarily. When it got more English speaking people of course it was in English and translated into Japanese. The Alaska Cannery Workers that he was active in, I became active in its Auxiliary, but primarily ^{was} through my I.L.D. role, ~~was~~ my connection with that. So I remember sitting through long meetings of the Alaska Cannery Workers for hours on a Sunday because a good many were also agricultural workers and would come in for their union meeting once a month to San Francisco. There were five different languages that had to be translated - ^{all transactions} Japanese, Chinese, Spanish, a couple of Filipino dialects (there was actually more than just five), and English. So there

- Y. were five main languages that ^{meetings were} it was conducted in. So when I spoke, for instance, at a meeting it would be translated into these five languages. ~~so~~ it lasted all day Sunday and the men sat there very patiently and listened and participated. There again it was mixed. Cigar makers were mainly Spanish so they spoke Spanish, but they had to have an English interpreter.
- K. I'm getting lost here.
- Y. So am I.
- K. Let's get back to the Party. What - did the party affect what movies you went to see, what books you read?
- Y. Well, there were certain actresses that I liked and when they were projected on the screen I went to see them. If it was something I thought that Joyce - I particularly liked musicals. Whenever there was a musical picture, even Ginger Rogers who was such a reaactionary, [laughter]. in ^{I guess} the thirties and forties she wasn't so well known as a reactionary. It was in the McCarthy period where really all of her feelings against the civil rights, - ~~No it didn't~~. I used to go and see as many ^{Russian} films that came as possible. I didn't get to see all of them because sometimes I was in court of speaking when they were in town. So it wasn't that I couldn't go to speak at this union or at this meeting because there was a Russian film and I have to go and see it. Nor was I that dedicated to a musical. I would go whenever possible and when I had the money to go. I didn't go to see Birth of a Nation. I haven't see it yet but I saw bits of it on television, but I haven't seen the whole thing. And Gone with the Wind, so that perhaps did affect my thinking, and reading the reviews in the Western Worker.
- K. What about books? I am thinking about how everybody
- Y. was reading Howard Fast at one time.
- Y. Oh yes. I read his books. I read some other books, but my interest was in reading books at that time

Y. that had anything to do with the fights to maintain rights to organize and what happened. I concentrated on that. Not that I wanted to be a lawyer or anything like that, but that ~~would be~~^{was} my field. A lot of it had to do with meeting men in the legal profession, discussing cases with them. I would want to be up with what happened. There was the C.S. [Criminal Syndicalism] trial going on, or rioting, or some other charges. Not all cases were the same. Some more violent. Actual murders of workers on the picket line took place, and you certainly had to treat those areas different than perhaps just somebody picked up for speaking on the street corner, although you had that right to speak without a permit, and the charge of speaking without a permit, certainly your tack takes a different path than if workers are killed on a picket line. It wasn't the same story - it was a violation of our rights, and therefore we would have to do this in explaining to what extent the violation was. So that the precepts that were issued, the directions that were issued, weren't all stereotyped. Basically, yes you fought for your rights, basically you asked for a jury trial, and don't give any more information to the police than what you legally have to give. That consists of an alias if it wasn't used with intent to defraud an innkeeper, which legally, by which legally is meant a landlord I guess, and not to reveal your place of work, because where people did give that information they were blacklisted and blacklisted out of industry, so that they had to look for other avenues to maintain themselves and raise their families.

K. A couple of other questions. The party participated in an awful lot of memorial meetings, too many of them for me to bother you with, but there are just two things that the party did participate in that I would like to know what you did. What about International Women's Day. How did you participate in that?

Y. If they had a meeting in a hall I probably would be one

Y. of the speakers and speak on whatever was the case of the day and linking it with the previous struggles and how International Women's Day was actually born in the United States and co-opted by the rest of the world as was May Day. And then it was a struggle for lower hours, and it was a struggle for the same wages, and it remains the same today. My speaking was primarily as someone connected with the International Labor Defense. I don't recall ever speaking directly for the Communist Party, you know, as being the communist party speaker. When I ran for office I was endorsed by the communist party, but my tack was from the angle of child care and the need for better schools and for preserving the rights of people. So you can see my election material was a little different than someone who was speaking directly for the party.

K. Who sponsored these International Women's Day meetings?

Y. Sometimes it was the party. Sometimes it would be a progressive women's organization. There were several women's groups among the different nationalities. Like the Finnish Women's Club, the Jewish Women's Cultural Club, sometimes it was the _____ society who would be the initial - I don't recall any International Women's Day meeting being called directly by the party. I may be mistaken. I remember the Paris Commune Day was always called by the International Labor Defense although the Communists, March 18th the I.L.D. used to have big rallies. Now May Day was called by the party primarily, and I would speak at some of the rallies if I was in town. On the other hand I spoke at great big mass meetings which they had for Tom Mooney at the Civic Auditorium. Theodore Drieser was one of the speakers, and Marcantonio, and yet I was one of the speakers too representing the International

Y. Labor Defense so that as I say, primarily my speaking role was more labor defense and political defense rather than -

K. What about Negro History Week. Did you participate in that in any way?

Y. Negro History Week didn't really come into being until fairly recently. Pre-war I don't recall any Negro History Week. There would be certain events that might take place. For instance Langston Hughes came back from Japan and he spoke on Japan. He came to San Francisco. Karl has a leaflet in Japanese that he issued, and he was the chairperson of that meeting. So I don't recall pre - there were a lot of Free the Scottsboro which the I.L.D. linked, because there were so many, Free Tom Mooney, Free the Harlan Miners, and we would have rallies around those three issues. Or else in some cities we would have just a Free Scottsboro rally that a church arranged just for Scottsboro and we held to just the Scottsboro issue. No doubt in the course the the speech it was pointed out that the same repression against labor and not just nine (we called them boys at that time and I think finally as the case went on the nine boys were dropped for the Scottsboro Nine). But those were the language of the day, and as we learned we learned not to use things that are insults to mature men and women. They were all under nineteen at the time. One was thirteen, so I spoke at a good many Negro churches on Scottsboro both in Los Angeles and here when the case was on. I arranged meetings where both Mother Mooney and Ada Wright, the mother of one of the Scottsboro Nine spoke, and then helped to raise ^{funds for} their international tour that the I.L.D. national had arranged for the two women to go to Europe to talk for their sons and other sons.

K. I've got to get into the I.L.D. thing with you. I don't know whether we can do it today or not.

K. Have you got another fifteen or twenty minutes?

Y. Oh, yes.

K. I have a series of questions I was building up on the I.L.D., but I think we can go into it now. I want to know how the I.L.D. functioned. We never discussed that.

Y. It was a ^{membership} ~~XXXXXXXXXX~~ organization with branches, and where there were huge communities of like, Hungarians, a colony, and there were enough members who wanted a branch we had a Hungarian Branch, a Finnish Branch, a Jewish Branch, where they spoke their native tongue. Most of them were immigrants who wanted to continue their ties. Karl, as I say, was ~~a longer~~ ^{longer} member ¹ than I ~~am~~. Now the International Labor Defense membership book -

K. You gave me a copy of that.

Y. When was the I.L.D. formed, in 1927 or 1925, Karl?
[Elaine asked her husband for this information]

Karl In Chicago, in 1925.

Y. Here the need for workers defense in 1927 was published - why they needed workers defense. The I.L.D., before I was a member of it, was very active in the Sacco and Vanzetti case. Now even though I had removed myself from the movement Eddie and I were very distressed at what was happening to Sacco and Vanzetti, and they were executed just twenty six days after Joyce was born. And I remember crying when the news came over the radio that they had been executed. We did have a radio, and it caused distress. Some of my relatives were "a" political, but were very distressed at what was happening to these two immigrants, feeling that it was a frame up, that they had no right to be executed. That just because they were poor workers the bosses were taking advantage of them. So the I.L.D. actually came into being around that case.

K. Did you have an executive board?

Y. We had an Executive Board that was elected. Each branch would elect a member to the executive board, and

Y. there was like a Los Angeles Executive Board. The district committee was from all the outlying areas. Now the Southern California District went up as far as Tulare. From Tulare up was ^{the} Northern California ^{District}. Some actions would dovetail. If a strike started in Bakersfield and stretched up to Tulare Northern California would become involved also because part of it was in their territory, and it was joint action.

K. Who determined policy?

Y. There was a guide line as to whom we would defend. Now the A.C.L.U. [American Civil Liberties Union] would defend a fascist. The I.L.D. wouldn't because we felt that what they were doing was teaching poison, to poison people against other people because of race or national origin, and we were opposed to it. We - when someone was arrested and they appealed to the I.L.D. for help we would find out the background of that person as much as possible, if they belonged to any organization and if that was an organization activity they were involved in with that organization. Would that organization vouch for that person. If there was an Unemployed Council demonstration they would be asked if this person was a member of the Unemployed Council. It was just like if the person was a member of the T.U.U.L. or the Agricultural Workers - whatever ~~they came to be~~ we would try to find out. Sometimes in mass arrests you ^{couldn't} go and ~~find everybody out, nor can you~~ post bail ^{for all}. You can offer to - because ~~first of all~~ funds are limited. You try to take out those who are sick first, or had a family to support. But that was part of the activity. We had a district committee meeting - In Southern California we would meet almost every week because there were so many cases. The Red Squad there built up a reputation that I think was international under Captain Hynes. And there were violations of what constituted a riot - you know, three or more people if he thought ~~it was~~ radicals ^{were} involved. That's the term "feather piddling".? We would have discussions

Y. If there were organizations - like if it was the Communist Party ~~and they were~~ planning a demonstration we would ask if they would let us know when they were planning the demonstration so that we could be prepared. If it was the Unemployed Council, if it was the T.U.E.L. or the T.U.U.L. planning a demonstration or calling out a picket line, calling people out from their jobs to strike we would like to be apprised of it so we would know that we ^{could} ~~be prepared~~ have ties. But in those days ^{many actions were} just spontaneous - you would hear about a neighbor being tossed out on the street and you would be there. It wasn't anything that was organized or planned that on Monday at ten o'clock you would go and turn on the gas because the baby was cold.

K. I was going to ask you something else. Was it an International organization?

Y. The International Labor Defense was - there was the International Red Aid which was an international organization which the I.L.D. became part of. Originally it was known as the _____. In Japan they had branches, while they could, of the International Red Aid, and it was through the International Red Aid that we got our information as to what was happening under fascism much sooner than others. We would get bulletins and things as to what was happening internationally.

K. Did you put out a paper yourself?

Y. Well, we had the Labor Defender, a monthly, and it was read far and wide. Unfortunately we don't have the Labor Defenders because that's part of the boxes that are missing, but I understand that Bancroft Library has a whole set of them, which goes into all the different cases.* Occasionally I wrote articles for the Labor Defender. I ~~got~~ ^{have} some of the stories I wrote about Eureka, about the tar and feather case, different cases that I was involved in, but that was later on. I never was

*In Moses Hall in Berkeley, Library of Government studies

Y. much of a writer.

K. How did you raise money for bail?

Y. It was a monthly dues organization with dues that varies. I think when I first joined it was ten cents, and then it went to twenty five ^{per month}. In different areas it was different. If there were cases, ~~And~~ there were support stamps issued. Each Christmas we had a special drive to raise funds for families of political prisoners. There was a whole string of political prisoners that were remnants of the C.S. cases, the Times case of 1910, McNamara, ~~and~~ who ^{were} ~~was~~ still in Jail. There were Mooney and Billings all those years. To raise money for special Christmas gifts for their families. And the I.L.D. would send to each political prisoner a monthly check for cigarettes.

K. Oh yes, the Five dollars.

Y. We also sent to their families. At Christmas time we would try to send ^{more} ~~to~~ we would have bazaars. We would have Red Letter days where we would get a permit where we would have cans for milk for the prisoners families and things, and it went into the fund nationally. Or if there was some ^{local} family here that we ~~knew of~~ a certain percentage would be taken and sent to the family right here if it was raised in San Francisco or Sacramento or wherever it might be. But it was a membership, dues constructed, with monthly meetings, with elections of their officers in their branches, and to the executive board and to the district committee from the different branches and areas.

K. I remember reading something about a picnic once too.

Y. Oh, we had ^{annual} picnics, sometimes even two a year, and in different areas. This area being - we might have a picnic here in San Francisco, and then Eureka planned one, and someone would be sent from the district office to attend and be the speaker. It didn't necessarily have to be me. Different ones of the district committee

Y. who attended different meetings.

Bail throughout Northern California was placed in our name, because it was placed in the name of the defendant, and if he or she was found guilty the judge could immediately confiscate some of it for a fine. So it was placed by a third party. They did not want to accept the International Labor Defense. So there was a group of attorneys and myself who were trustees of the bail fund. Triplicate receipts were issued. George Anderson^e, who was our chief trustee, had a copy. A copy was kept in a special box, and a third receipt was given to the person who owned the money. Bail was raised in the heart of the depression and thousands of dollars like five dollar, ten dollar, and up loans, and from people who had equity in property.

K. You told me about that and about Anita doing that.

Y. So that's how it was raised. And in mass arrests there wasn't always bail to take out everyone immediately, so it meant some stayed.

K. Who determined the priorities in taking people out?

Y. The executive board of the area would meet. Say and arrest took place in San Diego and they wrote and said ~~ten~~ were arrested and we immediately have to get two of them out because one has a heart condition, and ~~other~~ one had something else, and diabetics had to have their insulin and paraphernalia and these were not available. And sometimes it would be on the basis, let us say, the whole leadership was arrested, like in Long Beach. They would have to meet and tell us who they wanted out - their priority. When the Communist Party was ~~raided~~ and over one hundred arrested they would tell us so and so is first, or we want so and so to come out because ~~he~~ has epilepsy and needs treatment and must go out. And that's the organization involved telling the I.L.D. that that's who they wanted out.

- Y. They determined the priorities because then that organization was also guaranteeing their membership. Wherever we could get the guarantee of the organization that they would stand behind us. How would we, the I.L.D., know who should come out first? Maybe my tendency would be Ida Rothstein should come out first because she was the head of the I.L.D. and also one of those arrested. And maybe there was someone else that, since some I.L.D. members were out, and the leadership who were not arrested - therefore why should she be the first one? I am just giving this as an example where the Communist Party that was involved said, no so and so has to come out, so and so has been badly beaten and not being taken care of. And it might be someone who has never even openly spoken as a party member but was caught in the net, who was beaten up and had to come out, his or her injuries being so bad. Now, in the Salinas strike, for instance, the executive board of that union, the Shed Workers, had sent a letter to the I.L.D. and asked them to come down and help them with the arrests and the terror that was going on there, and when we got there the red-baiting had started and some of the reactionaries in the A.F. of L. said they wanted to have nothing to do with the I.L.D., but the husband of one of the women [Happy Brannigan] came in and said, "Look, I don't care if they are purple, cream cheese, or what-have-you, a red or what, if they are ready to take Louella out I want her out." And we went ahead and bailed out quite a number of the strikers although the Shed Workers Union, the executive board, were trying to disavow *any I.L.D. connection*.
- K. That was the lettuce strike?

- Y. Yes, the lettuce strike, although they invited us down there. We had sent a letter and said yes, that we would be willing to help them and with attorneys and what have you, and also sent one to the Filipino field workers, and there were quite a number of arrests, and we sent in attorneys and some were convicted and some ^{charges} were dropped afterward. But that's how we decided the priorities. First it came with the organization that was involved. Then if there was any question, or it might be someone that we had had previous experience with in some other arrest and now belonging to some other organization who might question it. Now when in) thirty four we had quite a number of arrests, and to this day I have my files. We had a German anti fascist who was an alien, who was a member of the I.L.D., who went to interview a lot of the aliens who were arrested, and reported that so and so ^{was} a fascist who likes Hitler. Well, we made no attempt then, when that was verified, that he would be one we would bail out. If he asked us for our defense we might send in an attorney during the deportation hearings because he was arrested in the dragnet of picking up the waterfront workers.
- K. You could give him to the A.C.L.U.
- Y. But we wouldn't really say go out of our way because in a dragnet we know that there are agent provocateurs who would be picked up. And there was so much bail put up, about one hundred thousand dollars in that one period, and the only thing we lost was two hundred and sixty dollars that was confiscated because two seamen didn't show up in court and the judge would not listen to our pleas to send a deputy down because these men might be behind ^{doors surrounded by} the National Guard and couldn't come out. You see the N.M.U. headquarters was surrounded and they couldn't come in or go out And to this day I have a feeling I wouldn't be a bit surprised if those seamen couldn't appear in court at that

Y. time because they were behind the National Guard
encampment. This was after the reign of -

End of tape four of second series

Elaine Yoneda Interview - second series - 5th tape

Friday, May 21, 1977

This is the Fifth tape in the second series of interviews with Elaine Black Yoneda for the California Historical Society.

K. There are a few questions I would like to ask you in relation to your last interview. Your mother was a radical and had brought you up with the feeling that everybody was equal, yet when you married Karl she wouldn't have him in the house. How did she rationalize this?

Y. Well, it was a contradiction. I suppose when something comes home to roost you are not quite prepared for it and she said it wouldn't look good to the neighbors and it never works out. Look at so and so who married a Negro. (We didn't say Black in those days). So and so was married to a Japanese and it didn't work out, and you have a child and you have other responsibilities, and perhaps you might lose out on some opportunities that might come to you. You know, rationalizing what might or might not be. And my father didn't participate in these discussions. I tried to draw him out - what his feelings were. They didn't come out until quite some time afterwards. He was opposed to my mother's position and thought that perhaps she was saying things to Joyce that she shouldn't say because Joyce was living with them, and continued to live with them until 1936.

K. When you talked to her did you ask her any of these questions?

Y. I said, "How do you justify your position?" Now I did not know that my mother and dad at that time were members of the party. I knew that they were members of a number of radical organizations, and I did not know their past activities or their current activities for quite some time. So that was something

Y. that they kept away from me. It wasn't their influence that put me in the ranks of the Communists.

K. How did the party react to this?

Y. ~~Ixxxxxxx~~ I never did take it up with - not knowing that they were party members I didn't discuss it. Some of the comrades who are no longer with us, like Ida Roth, I discussed it with her. She said, "She'll come around. Give her time. She'll come around." Of course she did. She did come around, and that particularly true after I had Tommie .

K. The thing that bothers me - as I remember, when I was in the party, there were even charges brought against people for discrimination against minorities, and yet with your mother nothing was ever -

Y. They both belonged on the fringe, and the fact that they read the Freiheit did not make them,

K. Ida even, you see -

Y. Ida felt that especially people who weren't educated, and my parents certainly were not educated in this country, and they had a limited education in Old Russia, that there were certain things that they probably never envisioned - and one of the incidents I know my mother had big arguments, and my father, and my grandmother who visited us for ^wyears on the Soviet Union. She went back. She couldn't adjust to life in the United States. This was the year I had Joyce, 1927, and they had big arguments because she ~~had found out~~ I was married to someone who wasn't Jewish. She might as well have stayed in Bolshevik Russia where her other granddaughter was married to a Russian engineer. And my mother had arguments with her on that score. So there was really a little contradiction because - "Oh, yes. they can come to my house and they can sleep and they can eat and everything else." And yet when it came to marrying their daughter [laughter] so that was a contradiction. And this bothered me for a number of years, and as I said she finally did come around.

K. Let's get into this. There is a question in my mind about the difference between the way your mother raised Joyce and the way she raised you.

Y. I think there was a little difference. They were more affluent by the time Joyce was there. And there again Joyce had clothes where it seemed like she came from Beverly Hill rather than from Dobbinson Street [the Boyle Heights section of Los Angeles, a Jewish community] in Boyle Heights because mother made her clothes for her. She was a very exquisite seamstress. She sent her to the I.W.O. [International Workers Order] ^{Shule} ~~scholar~~ [?] which was a - where she learned some Jewish. She can speak it, but doesn't know how to read or write it.

K. What about learning how to cook?

Y. Where Joyce gets her ability to cook, I don't know, and it may have been from watching my mother. But Joyce can cook in any language. You tell her you want a Korean meal and you'll have it. You tell her you want a Hawaiian meal and you'll have it - a Filipino meal and you'll have it. So where she learned (and it's just exquisite the way she cooks and arranged food). I always said she should have been an artist
a and she might have been if her father hadn't stopped her.

K. What about her years with you. Did you raise her in a way differently than you were raised?

Y. Well, I took her to different meetings. I tried to get her interested in the Pioneers [the Young Pioneers, an organization of young children of radical parents] but that was on the downgrade in that particular period. She knew of my activities. It was never hidden from her. She was with me on picket lines I was on, like picketing scrap [scrap iron to Japan] after school hours. And she had some conflicts of course because of the way her father acted when she was ten which made quite a conflict in her life.

- K. Yes, we have that, when he stole her away.
- Y. And from then on, I suppose if we knew a little bit more about - whether or not we would have gone into psychiatric care or not I don't know, but that seems to be the norm now. But it wasn't the norm then. And there were several episodes when she ran away, so she has had a life of conflicts and we probably didn't handle it right. And I explained that my covering for Ed for five years [explained to interviewer, not Joyce] was a very gross mistake.
- K. What about her learning about being a woman. When your mother didn't tell you about menstruation, how did you approach Joyce on it?
- Y. Well, she actually was at Ed's, and was ten years old when she started to menstruate so we hadn't discussed that yet. So that what happened then I don't know. When she came back from there, when I brought her back, then it was an accomplished fact. And I said, "I started at eleven and you are bigger now now than I was at eleven" because ^{she} was taller than I and much heavier. And I talked to her. I also didn't go into all the details because frankly I hadn't read up on the subject myself on how to break it to a ten year old -
- K. About sex?
- Y. Yes, about sex and what would be entailed. But when I had Tommy she was eleven and a half. There was some jealousy, but we tried to play it even. To this day if anybody says anything about Tommy, regardless of whether he has done right or wrong, she will battle for him, and there was a very close affinity there in that respect.
- K. Ok, that takes care of those questions. Now there are a few questions I want to ask about when you ran for office. How did you structure your campaign?
- Y. There was a committee set up to elect Elaine Black for Supervisor.
- K. Who was on the committee?

Y. There were communists and non communists on the committee, and speaking engagements were set up.

K. Wait a minute. How did you go about getting the committee?

Y. We sent out a call - those who were interested in electing Elaine Black - I believe the headquarters were on Fillmore street - for them to report to the headquarters to set up a committee for me to run for a non-partisan office. Anyone ^{could} ~~came~~ be on the committee. And it was a committee of members of the I.L.D. and other organizations. I believe there were even a couple of Auxiliary [the women's Auxiliary of the International Longshoremen and Warehousemen's Union] for by then I had been active in the I.L.W.U. Auxiliary, and those who were interested in my platform and what I had to say and knew I was endorsed by the Communist Party, for it was a non partisan campaign. And there were radio appearances.

K. How did you determine what your platform would be?

Y. There was discussion among all the communist candidates that were running for different offices on what the platform should be, what the major pressure should be in each campaign. Archie Brown had a campaign which was mainly geared to the trade union questions of the day; mine was for women and child care.

K. Pardon me. You were a communist, but it was a non partisan campaign? I see.

Y. We were ^{endorsed} ~~backed~~ by the Communist Party.

K. The Committee did not set the policy for the campaign then?

Y. Well, they had to set it. That should be the focus in each campaign. Here I was, the mother of a young baby. I couldn't do some of my activities - had to do it from home because there was no child care centers and things like that. So those points were -

K. What generally were the points?

- Y. They did something with my name, and I'm sorry I don't have the card.
- K. I have it.
- Y. That was the major focus of the campaign. I believe I also gave you a copy of part of a radio address which brought out what the platform was. And I would focus on these points. Now when I spoke to the League of Women voters at the St. Francis Hotel meeting I gave them my whole platform. Some of the women were surprised to see me. I don't know what they envisioned I looked like. The deputy sheriffs down in Salinas thought I was a great big giant, and here I am under five feet tall. I spoke to a good many trade unions and the Labor Council bringing my platform to them.
- K. How were you received?
- Y. Some of them said no, this isn't their night for candidates, and others said they weren't interested, and yet others let me speak, the Machinists, Cigar Makers and others, the Longshoremen.
- K. Did you just go to the meetings, or did they have certain nights?
- Y. Some of them had certain nights, like the League of Women Voters had certain afternoons for all candidates. We were all given a certain amount of time. And Oleta Yates was running (I have forgotten whether it was Assessor or some other office) so she was there. So that as many campaigns as I can remember we have always had women candidates for one office or another - not just all male candidates.
- K. Were you treated any differently because you were a woman?
- Y. Do you mean by those I spoke to or by my comrades?
- K. By those you spoke to.
- Y. If they were women's organizations I think they listened a little closer to what the women candidates of the day, whoever she may be or whatever party she is representing, or it could be non partisan not representing any party per se unless the question was asked. So

Y. they listened and the applause in some instance was quite extensive. In others it was just polite applause, that when a speaker is introduced, whether you like the speaker, there is a semblance of applause.

K. What about the men's unions?

Y. Well, in the unions like the Alaska Cannery Workers Unions and the Ship Scalers where I was more or less known and participated in a good many of their struggles and helped out and advised I was very well received. At times there were standing ovations when I got through. But that was part of it. As I say it depended on where I was going. And some didn't let me in.

K. How about Teamsters Unions. Did you speak to any of those.

Y. I don't recall ~~xxxxxxx~~ having anything to do with any teamsters at that point. I remember the Cleaners and Dyers, the Cigar Makers, the Jute and Shed Workers Union, and the Filipino Workers Union and Association, or whatever they called themselves. I don't recall their full names now, where I was received. There are also - there was a Filipino Social Club where I was invited to their festival. I don't recall their name, but one of our neighbors on Endicott Park was a South American Woman who was married to a Filipino man, and they had six children. And there was one incident where the brother in law who also lived with this family was shot by a policeman, and there was quite a case in the Filipino community. And they were very appreciative of the support the I.L.D. gave them, and so they invited me to their community club at the time. This was pre World War II, and invited me to speak on my campaign, and I went there and was very well received and remained on for the festivity. They did not ask me to leave when I got through speaking. And different ones came up afterwards and asked me questions. And at that time of course

- Y. the Filipinos were not allowed to become citizens, and their wives until much later weren't able to, if they had been citizens, regain their citizenship. They had to re-apply, so that there is a whole lot of, and also some of the Negro churches where I spoke ^{before} on the Scottsboro case, I ^{went and} spoke on my campaign. I gave out literature.
- K. How were you received in the Black community?
- Y. In quite a number of the churches I was very well received because they realized that if it hadn't been for the International Labor Defense, and even if it hadn't been for the Communist Party, the Scottsboro Nine would have long been gone. In fact it was the Communist Party who first brought ~~it~~ ^{public} to attention - the Scottsboro Case. There were quite a number of Black longshoremen in Local 10 and in the Ship Scalers so that the activities were well known. I had the endorsement of the Alaska Cannery Workers Union and the I.L.W.U. Local 10, and I campaigned once I got started.
- K. What was your vote. Do you remember?
- Y. I've got it written down someplace.
- K. I can look it up. It's on records.
- Y. It is on record, yes. I believe Archie got more than I did. But this wasn't the first time Archie ~~had~~ ran. This was the first time I had run. And that was the only time I ran for office.
- K. What happened to the committee when the campaign was over?
- Y. It was disbanded, and then when there was another election there was another committee set up for whoever the candidates were some of which I sponsored and some I didn't.
- K. Then we can get back on the I.L.D. We started to discuss the I.L.D., its structure and function. There are some questions I would like to have the answer to. For instance the relationship of the I.L.D. to the Communist Party.
- Y. Those of us who were communists and working within the

- Y. I.L.D., just as those who were trade unionists and communists, when issues were raised in that particular organization there would be a meeting of all those who were communist party members to meet and discuss whatever might be the issue at hand, and discuss with them - let's say a communist party meeting had been raided in Southern California and there were a lot of arrests - to discuss with them who would get out first. It wouldn't be up to the International Labor Defense to decide which person should be bailed out first because the organization involved is the one we consulted. We had what they called fraction meetings. Those who were communists were called ~~into~~ ^{into a} meetings to discuss whether or not ~~are we~~ ^{since} there is going to be a demonstration on February the 28th. Is the I.L.D. prepared with bail? Do we have a list of people that we can call to come in with property or cash ^{to use so} that we could bail people out if ~~there was~~ ^{there} mass arrests and high bail? ~~And discuss it.~~ Sometimes I would take issue with a planned demonstration saying it's too close ^{to} another demonstration - will we have the forces there? Will we be able to provide the proper defense if there are mass arrests? Because we have so many on record right now, or whatever the issue might be. And sometimes if there were other mass arrests and there was a question of who among the defendants would defend themselves if they were communists. Now if those who were ~~non~~ ^{non} communists were arrested and wanted to defend themselves ~~there would be no way that~~ - we would have to discuss the plan with the attorneys and explain some of the pitfalls.
- K. Were there any disagreements as to policy between the members of the Party and the members of the I.L.D.
- Y. No, not any.
- K. What I am trying to find out is whether the structure of the I.L.D. was really separate and apart from the party.
- Y. It most certainly was, and had it's own meetings,

- Y it's own committees, had its own dues structure. Only those of us who were members of the communist party and had a leading position in the I.L.D. would be called in to discuss a coming demonstration that the party was organizing, or someone else was organizing, where there might be mass arrests, to determine who among the party members shouldn't go to that particular demonstration because he or she had so many charges pending they would be a target; or whether or not that person should go. And that was just dealing with the people who were *members* and it was with leading members of the party not just general party meetings where this was discussed.
- K. OK, now there is another question. You had ethnic groups within the I.L.D., and you mentioned that if they wanted a language group they would set it up. Was this encouraged?
- Y. It was encouraged at that time.
- K. Why?
- Because of the language difficulty, and there were a great many more ethnic papers ~~than~~ in their own languages than there are today. And as I remember in the early thirties there were still fresh immigrants who wanted democracy. A lot of them had left their so-called motherland because they were oppressed there, and came here seeking what would be a fair life, and found that there was oppression ~~there~~, that there was exploitation; that when you wanted to join a union to get better conditions you might get your head smashed. So they had to get together. So if there were Hungarian groups, Jewish groups, Japanese, Chinese branches, depending in what area it was. There might be a whole state where there wouldn't a Finnish Club, and there might be a state where there would be three. Like in Reedley we had a Finnish group. We had one in San Francisco and in Los Angeles. No doubt they had ^{one} in Minnesota too, but whether they had them in other states and

- Y. districts, I don't know. They had a Japanese Branch in New York, but whether they had ~~in~~ any place else outside of the west coast, I don't know.
- K. Here's another thing that bothered me. The ILD supported people in jail who didn't have recourse to other means, but there was a proliferation of committees - a State Committee to repeal the C.S. Law, a Committee for the Defense of the Foreign Born, a National Committee for the Defense of Political Prisoners, It confuses me. Why so many?
- Y. A lot of those organizations came into being-like the Committee for the Protection of Foreign Born came into being long after the I.L.D. was formed in 1925.
- K. Why was it formed if the I.L.D. was doing the same thing?
- Y. Well, not exactly, because we had people who were just interested in what was happeneng to the foreign born and they could care less what was happening to Mooney or the Scottsboro Nine or the Kentucky miners. They were interested in what was happening to the foreign born. And therefore they formed that committee which worked closely with the I.L.D. in different districts on different cases. Now the Committee for the Protection of the Foreign Born, most of the bail came from I.L.D. ~~XXXXXX~~^{sources}, until they got their own bail fund. Also it took on a new dimension when the Alien Registration Law came into being. ~~which made a new dimension~~. In the same way you had a Free Scottsboro Committee, Free the Scottsboro Nine or the Scottsboro Boyd (we said then because they certainly were just boys from thirteen to nineteen, ~~and we had no right to call them anything else~~) ~~so that~~ - but they worked with the International Labor Defense. And the International Labor Defense supplied most of the wherewithal to conduct the campaign. When Ada Wright, the mother of two of the Scottsboro Nine, went to Europe with

Y. mother Mooney the I.L.D. helped raise a bigger amount of funds through their contacts along with the National Committee to Free the Scottsboro Nine. Now there were people who were just interested in that, so that the International Labor Defense from 1931 on conducted a joint campaign to free Mooney, the Kentucky Miners and the Scottsboro Nine. Those were the three major national and international focuses of the I.L.D. Then there ^{are} was the local cases. There were the C.S. cases in California which did not have a separate committee, the Criminal Syndicalism cases, through the International Labor Defense, and those who were Communists through the communist party working with the I.L.D. for their defense.

When the unions got more affluent they started having their own defense committees for their members who were arrested.

K. Like King Ramsey Conner?

Y. And the Modesto case and other cases- the Mine, Mill and Smelter case. But when they were first started, when this new upsurge of organizing in the thirties, the unions had very little -

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Second side of tape

Counter #1

K. On this little pamphlet I showed you, I'll give you a copy of it, why did you ask people to ask for jury trials and plead not guilty?

Y. Because ninety nine times out of a hundred ~~it was~~ ~~that~~ they were not guilty of the charges ~~that were~~ ~~put~~ against them. And the only way that you could get a message across was if you had a jury that could be questioned and bring out some of the issues. If you just left it in the hands of a judge you'd get nowhere because - take an example. In thirty four Steiger held kangaroo courts. He went up to the prison part of the Hall of Justice and conducted trials without notifying people of what their rights

Y. were or anything, and he would say thirty days, or ninety days, or whatever, and so they asked for jury trials, some of them did. As a result there were about thirty men in jail-when the vigilante terror started-for about three weeks or more without a jury trial, and their bail was one thousand dollars each, ^{which} ~~and that~~ made it quite a heavy burden in the heart of the depression to raise another thirty thousand dollars bail. A lot of it was tied up in other cases already. For instance there was four thousand dollars up on me and when I was re-arrested that had to get released, and then ~~it was~~ re-posted ~~and~~ for the same amount, but that was quite a lot because there was more than one charge placed against me and there were two arrests involved. But I spent time too. Some of the cases now, it is instant bail. There was no such thing then as instant bail. It had to be raised, and especially in some of the outlying areas where people weren't known you just didn't go and ask for bail if the people don't know anything about the defendant. And you would have to do a little bit of research to find out. Perhaps the person was a plant of the employers rather than being someone whose rights were ^{actually} violated. So you just didn't just automatically ^{place bail} because the charge might be just refusing to move on, if that's a civil rights case. To determine that there had to be other factors involved as well. But your political beliefs, unless you were a Nazi, made no never mind to the International Labor Defense in the offer of aid. Now we had quite a bail fund even though it was in the heart of the depression. I believe I explained it was from a dollar up, whatever anybody could ^{loan} ~~give~~, and also if you ~~needed~~ it back, If you gave for a specific case you were told, now look, that case might last a year; it may have to be appealed. If you are giving it, say, for Elaine Black, it might be a long

Y. time before the case is settled. It may be tied up for a year. It may be tied up for two, depending on the trial. Therefore you would have to give us a heck of a lot of notice if it is for a certain individual. But if it is generally into the bail fund, if ~~it is~~ under one hundred it ^{was repaid} ~~is~~ on demand. You can struggle around and get it replaced. But if it is over one hundred you have to give thirty days' notice, depending on the amount. ~~So that~~ We didn't have too many who were property owners so that if you had property up for certain cases you couldn't use it for other cases. You would have to start looking for a new set ~~of~~ people who would put up their property. If there was an arrest in Salinas you would try to get a property owner in Salinas, or in Pismo Beach, or down in Fresno you would try to get ^{it there} ~~that~~. And if not you would try to raise as much money as possible from friends ^{and sympathizers} ~~of that particular cause~~ ^{or person} ~~whatever it was.~~

I think you noticed in there that you do not have to give your true name. You can give any name. You can use an alias providing it is not to defraud an innkeeper. By an innkeeper it is meant a landlord or someone ^{running} ~~in~~ a hotel or a place of living. So you can use an alias and it is not a crime. Often it was used to protect your family from harrassment, from your home being invaded and smashed (and it has happened). Or ~~from~~ keeping your job intact because if your employer found out that you were arrested in a demonstration, ^{against the fascists, etc} ~~he might be a hide-bound fascist~~ and you would be out on the street. And there was enough unemployment through ~~just~~ ^{so-called} ~~things~~ ^{causes} ~~so that didn't have to be the reason.~~

They tried to say that I was a vagrant, and the appellate court ruled that if it had been issued by anyone else it would have been welcomed with open arms. Nothing in that was against the law. And to this day I say that having a jury

Y. trial and not throwing yourself on the mercy of the court is the right way for someone whose civil rights have been violated- whether it is the right to speak, the right to meet, advocate, the right to petition, because you can bring it out. If you throw yourself on the mercy of the court you might get a judge who will give you castor oil straight, and the other will give it to you with orange juice. [laughter]

K. What was a workers jury?

Y. In some of the bigger cases like textile, when the textile struggles were on, men and women who were interested in civil rights and the rights to organize, and who were interested to see that the men and women who had been arrested for demonstrating for a cause - they would go and sit in the court and draw conclusions of whether or not the people involved were actually getting a fair trial, or whether or not their rights were being further violated, not just the arrests, but further in the court's ^{by certain} rulings, and then coming back, and some of them who were more vocal speaking at public meetings and saying now so and so of the textile workers is charged with murder, however she cannot be guilty of murder because she was speaking at a union meeting or a demonstration in another town while the textile strike was on, and yet she or he was ^{rank} possibly charged with a so-called murder, a frame-up.

K. ¹How did this workers jury get selected?

Y. I guess in different communities they would volunteer, and say, "I am going to Sacramento. ~~XXXXXXXXXXXX~~
~~XXXXXXXXXXXX~~ XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX. The Criminal Syndicalism cases are on. I can give a week to be in the courtroom." Most of them were volunteers because you just couldn't take time off.

K. They volunteered to the ILD?

Y. The ILD or whatever the defense committee was, and they would go and sit in in the courtroom.

K. What was the background of this? How did it get started?

Y. I really don't know too much about it because in certain cases it already had taken place. I never participated in a workers jury so I really don't know, ~~but~~ ^{about this facet} I guess hearing from some other people who had gone to ~~some~~ ^{so-called} hearings. Sometimes there wasn't even a complete jury. ~~It wasn't just~~ twelve men and women. Maybe just a handful who sat a certain period of time in the courtroom and they would get together and say, now I found _____ the rights of that person was involved, and then put it in the Labor Defender or in the different ^{progressive} newspapers of the day, or even if ^a the union was involved, in ~~the~~ ^{into} newspaper. So that was the workers jury intent, to come back and report back. I don't know whether they have anything like that now.

And another one of my feelings is to pack the courtroom and have people there to show that we have friends, and I think that was a good thing to do and saved a good many lives of men and women from going to long terms in prison.

K. Was that an ILD policy?

Y. I think if you were to go through the People's World and the Western Worker and the Daily Worker to look up trials -

K. Yes, I saw that.

Y. They had a trial of the week and probably a whole calendar of the week so that people could go. And yes, we did urge - we gave out ^{thousands of} leaflets around cases to have people at the courtroom, and it still prevails today. I think there is a public interest in seeing that civil rights aren't violated, constitutional rights - but there is still a lot more to be done.

K. Here's another question. The ILD had campaigns of letters to judges and congressmen and district attorneys. How did you feel about this policy?

Y. I think it was a good one. I think it is still germane today. There are cases today that warrant people sitting down and writing a letter. The Wilmington Ten case in North Carolina, for instance, that is just becoming noticed by ~~the~~ other press. There have been a couple of editorials and ~~things~~ ^{letters} in the Chronicle, ~~where~~ ^{campaign to} there is writing to the judge or the district attorney, and it is very germane to see that ~~these men~~ ^{these} (and ~~there are~~ ^{men} nine Blacks and one white woman). The white woman is now out on probation, but there are two hundred and eighty two years ^{sentences} between the ten of them that they have been sentenced to for defending themselves against the Klan in North Carolina. And it is very germane to write to the powers that be to get them out.

K. In the thirties, what effect did it have?

Y. Quite an effect, I believe, in a good many cases. The press would ^{take} make note. The prosecutors would make ~~xxx~~ remarks, ^{some of} the judges involved would make remarks about the packed courtroom and the riff-raff that was in the courtroom. And ^{most} ~~when a woman~~ in those days came to court wearing gloves and ~~what~~ ^{what} so they called them riff-raff. And there were a good many housewives who came. They weren't working and came to court - sympathizers of the International Labor Defense and interested in what was happening in the court. The courtrooms were packed most of the time when we had jury trials.

K. What about the letters and the telegrams? Did they have effect?

Y. I believe that they did because they would mention that they were being harrassed by all these letters and petitions and so on. I had Judge Robinson ~~Robinson~~ ^{LA 21105} admit to me on the bench that he had signed the Scottsboro petition, but I called him a racist just

- Y. the same.
- K. I remember that - about the Filipino people.
- Y. Yes, how he treated the Filipino people. The judge who signed it was the senior. Now junior is even retired.
- K. ~~Jim tells me~~
In the longshore strike Lazarus was very good with the longshoremen, letting them off right and left.
- Y. Yes, he was one of the fairer judges. Steiger and I have forgotten, I would have to look it up, were the most vicious. Steiger was an open fascist. He thought Hitler could do no wrong. At times he wouldn't let me into the courtroom to see what the roster was, what ^{cases} ~~was~~ coming up. And on the other hand judge Meikle, a woman judge came on after the thirty four strike. I think she was appointed in thirty six, Teresa. I believe Edith Wilson who as a Deputy District Attorney and handled cases in court. I don't know whether I told you this - they propositioned me one day -
- K. I want to ask you that question later. What was your role in the I.L.D. Executive Board meetings?
- Y. Nationally or locally?
- K. Tell me about the role nationally first.
- Y. Nationally, I didn't go back to meetings. It was too costly. The only major meeting of the I.L.D. I attended was a convention in 1937 in Washington, D.C. at which there were greetings from President Roosevelt. Vito Marcantonio was a ^{Congressman} ~~Councilman~~ [from New York] ^{as well as} ~~was~~ was the President of the I.L.D. At that convention I was elected ^{Pacific Coast Vice President} ~~and~~ La Rue McCormick from Southern California was one of the delegates from Southern California, and I ~~was~~ representative of Northern California. But they were in communication with me and any major thing that might be coming up that the I.L.D. would want to have nationally, like a national tour of different speakers on different cases like the Ada Wright ^{and Mother Moore} tour to Europe - ~~I was the Pacific~~

Y. ~~Coast Vice President - and Mother Mooney and Ada Wright went to Europe~~ to appear before some of the International Red Aid (that's the International organization ^{to which} we were affiliated) ~~and they~~ arranged meetings in various countries on the Mooney and the Scottsboro case. In turn there would be outstanding speakers, like Thomas Mann ^{who} came from England and spoke here at a big mass rally. And there were visits by different people to get into San Quentin, to attempt to see if they could get into Folsom where Billings was. And occasionally to see McNamara because he was shifted from Folsom to San Quentin and back again. To try to attempt to get visitors - I was on the visiting list. I could go to see Billings and McNamara, but others couldn't so there would be a hassle, for a person like Thomas Mann, for him to see them. And to arrange for the monthly meetings. That was part of ~~an~~ ^{our} intention each month, if we had thirteen people in San Quentin to have thirteen go so each one would have a visitor.

K. What about the Executive Board meetings here then?

Y. The Executive Board met on a monthly basis for the district and - I mean San Francisco and the immediate periphery like Oakland; and on a district basis which went on down to Tulare and up to the Oregon border quarterly, and each branch would have a representative come to discuss campaigns. And the ongoing campaign was to raise prisoners' relief, a monthly check to be sent to each prisoner and to families, and then there were special campaigns around Christmas for families of political prisoners. ~~And we~~ we would discuss what we would do in each area if there was a case pending. How it was going. Has the attorney been paying attention to the case. Has there been neglect, and so on. ~~Or~~ if the bail was put up, was there a need to change bail, you know the bailer, and so on. So we met and discussed campaigns. And also prepared dances, ^{and} also bazaars, ~~had to be discussed,~~

K. Let me ask this - about the five dollars a month for labor prisoners, the ILD did a lot more than that. What did the phrase, wards of the ILD, mean?

Xxx I read in your ILD paper that children of prisoners were considered wards of the ILD.

Y. There wasn't the relief set up there is today where someone could apply for needy children and all the red tape that goes with it, let alone the funds available. So the ILD had taken upon itself to see that the children of political prisoners had a little something ^{each month}. It wasn't much because some families were rather large, but if there was somebody in the immediate family who could take care of them - like there was no question about Joyce needing something while I was in jail because my folks could provide that. That's just an example. On the other hand if there was no one to take care of Joyce they would have to see that she was properly taken care of, you know, have a roof over her head, went to school, and really make sure that she was taken care of because her mother was in jail. She did not need it, but there were children who did. Say Jane S. in New Jersey, both her mother and father were in jail, and there was nobody around in New Jersey to take care of her, that would be -

K. I see. How did you help the families of prisoners?

Y. We would try, if there were children who were left uncared for, to get people to take them into their homes, for the time their parents were in for thirty days or ninety days or whatever it is, and see that that child is provided for; and if necessary help out with some of the finances. And that became an extra burden with money being as tight as it was, especially during the depression and dues were ten cents and then twenty five cents a month.

K. I know in December you had this big Christmas party for Prisoners relief, but what was the summer milk drive?

Y. That was to make sure - there were beginning to be

Y. some programs in some areas where they would give milk to children instead of dumping it, but there was no school in summer, so to make sure that the children of the political prisoners had milk. In schools it wasn't a general program. There were some areas, but to see that it was universal. It wasn't just for children of political prisoners in the United States. There were political prisoners all over. And there were a lot of children of Spanish refugees that the I.L.D. supported. And through the International Red Aid we supported that. And there were thousands of children of political prisoners in Japan that most of the world didn't know about because they were against what their Emperor and ruling militarist class was doing in China. So there were thousands of men and women in jail in Japan, and attempts were made to see that they got some help.

K. Was this through International Red Aid?

Y. To which the I.L.D. was affiliated.

K. I had no conception that there was so much work to be done for political prisoners. I remember about reading of giving aid to Cuban workers.

Y. Yes. There there was an attempt to get a better form of government in the thirties too. It wasn't just something that happened in the fifties.

K. In other words, this was through International Red Aid - they would send out a notice?

Y. For instance, we knew about what was happening in Japan through the seamen who came here, through contacts with seamen telling what was happening there. And also they would bring out - the same thing as what was happening in Germany. There would be little tissue paper sometimes that would come through seamen primarily from different areas of what was happening. But the seafarers as a whole where men who had been tried through strikes and struggles, through the Palmer raids and what have you, and knew the value of working for better

Y. conditions.

K. Let's see, another question. Oh yes, what contact did you have with Jim Rolph. He was the mayor about that time.

Y. I believe he was the mayor. Merriam was the governor. When was Rolph Governor, was he before Merriam?

K. Yes.

Y. I think when I came to San Francisco Rossi was the mayor. I don't remember anything.

K. You did have contact with Rossi because I remember reading about your going up to his office.

Y. Rossi, the mayor, yes. I went many times to the mayor's office protesting the actions of the so-called intelligence squad or red squad, protesting the deputizing of vigilantes so they could crack more heads, and the mass arrests, the breaking up of headquarters.

K. What good did this do?

Y. Well, with Rossi, I would be surprised if he didn't _____.

Of course I shouldn't say that, but he certainly was no friend of labor. He was a man who was quite set in his ways, and always in behalf of the Industrial Association and the employers. And Merriam, our governor, I had several confrontations with him.

K. I remember that, in Sacramento.

Y. I had other confrontations with him on the subject of violations of civil rights. A good many of the sections were declared illegal and they were still using it, and still jailing men and women. There were many confrontations with other, sometimes government officials who came here. I remember Madam Perkins ~~xxxx~~ was here and I had a session with her at the Whitcomb Hotel.

K. Did you have a session with her privately?

Y. Once with her privately, and once with others ^{present} about what was happening with immigration; that people who were fighting for their rights should ~~be at~~

- Y. not be ~~xxxxxxxxxxxxxx~~ ^{intimidated by immigration officials and be able to} exploited, ~~and~~ join unions.
- K. Was she amiable?
- Y. Well, she listened. She didn't say get the devil out of here or have me shoved up against a marble wall. She listened. I said the law says they can join a union on the one hand. On the other hand if they join a union and the bosses think they are radical then that's ground for deportation, and cited some of the cases of the day pending then. Like one man who claimed he was born in the United States, ~~and I would not be a bit surprised,~~ but was raised in a Mexican family and spoke broken English. He never had a chance to go to school, and ^{had} nine American born children. His deportation case went on for twenty years. The bail was up on him in my name for twenty years. He never did get deported. He was finally released.
- K. What result did your meeting with Madam Perkins have?
- Y. I believe that some of the Immigration Department ^{duties} ~~were~~ taken away from the Department of Labor and put into the Department of Justice because of some of her questioning ^{used} of some of the tactics. I don't say that was it, but it wasn't long afterwards that it was taken away from the Department of Labor and put in the Department of Justice. ~~There again~~
- K. There is one more question I want to ask about the ILD. As the unions started to take over their own cases, like the Modesto boys, King Ramsay Conner, Webster Smallman, what was your relationship to the unions?
- Y. We worked together. We planned joint affairs. We planned joint committees to go to visit them in the prison. And most of the attorneys that they hired were from the ILD ranks -- who had been attorneys in the I.L.D.

Tape six of second series of interviews with Elaine Yoneda at her home in San Francisco, California. May 30, 1977

K. This is Memorial Day, May 30th, 1977, and this is the sixth tape in the second series of interviews with Elaine Black Yoneda for the California Historical Society. Elaine, we were talking about the I.L.D. last time, and ended up on discussion about political prisoners. I want to talk about when the union took over defending their own people, what was your relationship to the unions as far as the Modesto boys, King Ramsey Conner, the Webster Smallman Defense- how did you relate to the union? [rephrasing of last question on last tape]

Y. We became part of the defense committees and met with them, organized our members and sympathizers to go down to court to visit them after conviction, helped in some instances to raise the bail by giving contacts to those who were in charge of particular cases, and a good many of the ILD attorneys became union attorneys on retainers from the affected unions. Even without the unions having a case they needed attorneys to have on tap to discuss certain things pertaining to their contracts. A good many of the ILD attorneys were retained by unions as their legal counsel, not just for those that were under arrest. Unions affiliated to the International Labor Defense by paying certain fees based on their membership; retained their affiliation with the ILD because of so much having to be done in that area. There was still an awful lot of political and labor prisoners throughout the United States that were in jail. Mooney was in jail until January 7th, 1939. A lot of unions by then had their own defense counsel.

K. How did unions affiliate to the ILD?

Y. By paying a per capita on their membership - a flat rate per year dues to the organization.

K. Was this on a national scale?

Y. Some were national. Some were local. It depended on the unions. A local would affiliate, it didn't have to be an international. Perhaps maybe ~~even~~ the international ^{involved} may have ^{even} frowned down on ~~some of~~ the affiliations. They retained their affiliations, like the Alaska Cannery Workers Union, on their letterhead they embossed that they were affiliated, and ~~the union~~ officials on their cards had "affiliated to the International Labor Defense."

K. Why was that?

Y. I guess when you look at the force of the Alaska Cannery Workers Union, most of them were of what today is known as the Third World, or minorities - a good many Chinese, Japanese, Mexican-Americans were members. When their meetings were held (and I attended many meetings) -

K. Oh yes - you told us that.

Y. I said all that - translations and everything - so that many members were being harrassed, especially ~~native born~~. And it is true today, So many of the ~~Native born~~ American-Mexicans are accosted on the streets and ~~said~~ ^{told} they are aliens. Then they are picked up and it ~~had to be~~ ^{is} a hassle to prove ^{citizenship} ~~we~~ certainly don't go around carrying our birth certificates, any of us.

K. They are trying to get us to do it.

Y. Yes. But so far it hasn't gone across. There ~~was~~ ^{are} a lot of pick ups, ~~were~~ maybe just kept overnight but certain defenses had to be provided.

K. What other unions belonged to the I.L.D.?

Y. The Cigar Makers. This was before the war they affiliated. Some of them ^{handled} didn't affiliate but any case that the ILD/they publicized ~~it~~. It would be aired in their meetings that so and so had a trial coming up and the ILD was going to have a

Y. protest meeting or whatever it is. And some of the Unions like the Mine Mill and Smelter Workers, different locals up in the gold field area after we helped, some affiliated. Some would send in donations to other cases or the milk fund, the Christmas fund, or the political prisoners fund.

I don't know whether I mentioned to you that J.B. McNamara -

K. Gave \$5.00 back?

Y. Yes. Because so many of us didn't realize really what was happening in Spain at that particular time or grasp the full meaning until more information came out.

K. I don't remember why he gave back the \$5.00.

Y. It was that our comrades in Spain need it more than he does. He specifically sent it back and the International Labor Defense later on began a campaign to raise funds for Spain. Even as recruits, volunteers for the Abraham Lincoln Brigade, they were also raising money to see that the rights of these people who were enlisting in the Abraham Lincoln Brigade, if any of them were brought up on charges there would be a fund to take care of them, or any refugees that might have gotten out - children particularly.

K. Was the Friends of the Abraham Lincoln Brigade an offshoot of this?

Y. It may have become - of course that was nationally and internationally, and I had nothing to do with setting up that organization. But certainly raised money for that particular fund. I think my ILD membership card has a Spanish benefit stamp in it. We issued stamps nationally and members were urged to buy. I think they were twenty five cents a stamp. And Chinese war relief as well because of the attack of Japan on the Chinese people. We spoke out against that.

K. What was the result of the development of the CIO -

K. What was the relationship of the ILD to the CIO?

Y. A good many of the leaders of the CIO, whether they were some of those that were in power or not, a good many of their organizers were also communists, ~~all over~~. And ~~there~~ ⁱⁿ California in the agricultural fields Karl was one of the organizers. He was an official for UCAPAWA [United Cannery and Packinghouse Workers of America] ^{especially Smada} Mary Amata, a Japan born woman, between them, they organized over a thousand Japanese women who worked in canneries from Terminal Island up to Stockton. And it was quite a force in those days. Karl and Mary Amata. She was also member of the communist party and ~~was~~ a member of the ILD. ~~She was even in a party unit. I don't personally know that. Karl would know that.~~

K. What about unions like the longshoremen and the Warehousemen?

Y. A good many of them, ~~especially in~~ _____ and in steel there were a good many communists who were organizers in the different locals. They may not have become officials in the union, but certainly a good many of them served on executive boards and on strike committees.

K. What relationship did they have to the ILD?

Y. If they set up, like the Mine Mill and Smelter Workers had a strike up in the gold fields - they used the ILD as their defense media. There was not enough funds in these isolated locals up in Nevada county, Grass Valley, and Boca for them to have defense funds of their own. So they called upon the ILD to help. And we supplied attorneys and bail and strike relief.

K. What finally happened?

Y. Well the overall organization - the different branches were disbanded, but the national structure of an office was kept. And in some areas the ILD still maintained branches, but there were no district organizations. And just when it happened I don't know because I went into a "relocation camp" in 1942. So when the actual dismantlement of the ILD took

Y. place in California I don't know. But it took place in the eight and a half months that I was in ~~the~~ American concentration camp. But when I came out there was just no ILD as such.

K. What did you think about that?

Y. I was opposed to the dismantling. I felt that the organization should have been maintained in each area. Perhaps not on the scale it had been before with its regular monthly meetings, ~~or in some places monthly meetings~~, but at least a skeletal and the bail fund. Because some bail was still up, especially on deportation cases. A structure should have been kept so that if again there were attempts of violating and denying us our basic rights we could organize. And it came about in the fifties, the McCarthy era, where we had to start from scratch to try and defend the rights of those who were attempting to maintain their organizations and maintain their rights. You know what happened then, the blacklist and everything, and had there been an organization with the experience of 1925 on, the International Labor Defense with its victories and with its losses, having all that at their fingertips - the defense of those who were involved in the Smith Act cases and other violations would have gotten a bigger momentum quicker than it did. Of course in the end we saw that there was mass protest. In various areas people did not go to jail. But then we had a lot of those who did get long terms under the Smith Act.

K. How did you make your feelings known?

Y. It was difficult. I guess in talking to some people. When I first got out of Manzanar, let's face it, Karl had enlisted for Pacific warfare and there were moments of wondering what would happen; would he be captured? And even our four year old would wake up and say "What's going to happen to daddy?"

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Y. Why didn't he go to Europe with Uncle Herb." (That was Herb Nugent). go to Europe and fight Hitler. Why is he going over there? And how do you explain it to a four year old that his father has enlisted for Pacific war? ^{He's in the army.} Are when those were his fears. And I said "Wherever the army send him, that's where he will go," and I was asking almost the same questions - what is going to happen - as our four year old was asking, So there was a period perhaps when I didn't even say anything about it, ~~or it didn't even strike me.~~ So the first time I even raised the question, maybe even after the war when we went to setup a defense committee, where I expressed those feelings. I am not going to say that the minute I heard about it I ^{spoke out} Then, of course, when the Civil Rights Congress was being organized, I expressed it then - "Gee if we only had that list of attorneys and where they are. Because some of them had gone into service and never came back. And others had gone elsewhere. Some had moved out to the west coast that we didn't know were ILD attorneys. It became a matter of trying to locate and setting up defense committees and getting attorneys.

K. There are two things, to finish up on the ILD. What kind of relationship did you have with the national office?

Y. Primarily through correspondence. They had letters that would come out, outside of the Labor Defender, going more into depth in some cases that were of national import. Then we in turn would write reports of what was happening here and the outstanding case going on, like the Modesto case or the King-Remsey-Conner case. We would send out correspondence. Sometimes the official bulletins from that defense committee were all sent on to the national office. They in turn would keep us apprised of prisoners who were in jail for long terms. Perhaps here, if he was a Lithuanian, we would have a Lithuanian group who would adopt ~~him~~ - that particular prisoner. Also different branches were urged to adopt prisoners and make that their

Y. prisoners relief. And letters were mailed to the prisoners. In turn with Southern California we maintained a closer relationship even ~~almost~~ than with the national office; more letters, phone calls if need be on different cases. Often - we didn't have jurisdictional disputes - but as an example the 1933 cotton strike was in both districts so that we had to work very closely together on the arrests that took place, the murders that took place, the family relief of those who were in jail, because it wouldn't be right if Los Angeles sent to the same family as we did. It might be a borderline case and we would have to decide whose responsibility to see that the family ~~xxxxxx~~^{gets} it and so on. So there was the meshing of trying to see that the defense and everything else was equally taken care of because in that cotton strike (which was a classic example of murders by vigilantes and the police force and mass arrests and the need for prisoners relief and family care when the breadwinners were in jail, and protest meetings). In the Salinas strike ~~xxxxxxx~~ although it was up here a statewide speaking tour was arranged for some of those who had been arrested in Salinas. And while they came out of this district we went into both districts to speak in protest and get letters to the District Attorney and the Attorney General.

K. I think that will do on that then. There are so many things we could go on forever. There is still more on the ILD, however. We covered a lot of aspects on your activities, and I think I wrote you a letter on this. When I went through it again there were additional questions I figured I had to ask you. For instance, in Long Beach we never talked about this group called the Invisible Eye, or the KKK, that beat up people, and they arrested four KKK members there. This was before you left Los Angeles. Two guys Yxx there were arrested for ostensibly stealing a car.

Y. Well, there were all sorts of trumped up charges our people were arrested on.

K. You were there during the Long Beach trial, weren't you?

Y. Yes, I ~~was~~ there. I wasn't there when the arrests occurred. I was in a hospital in San Luis Obispo. Returning from a Mooney Conference, the Statewide conference, the car I was in was in an automobile accident and two of us were injured enough to have to spend some time in San Luis Obispo hospital while the others went on back to Los Angeles and San Pedro and some of them were among those who were arrested. Sadie and I returned to Los Angeles the day after the arrests. It was on a Saturday. And the first I knew about the arrests - we hadn't seen a newspaper - was when I walked into the Co-Op Restaurant on Brooklyn and Mott and one of the women sitting there let out a shriek, and said, "Look what Hynes did to Elaine." And as much as I hated the man I wasn't going to accuse him of anything that he hadn't done. There was too much he had done that he had to be accused of. And I turned to her and I said, "What do you mean, Hynes did to me." and she said, "Oh, Elaine, are you trying to deny what you are," and I didn't get the drift of it. We had been away and didn't know about this membership meeting that was held the night before in Long Beach on a Friday. And I looked at this woman and said, "I don't know what you are saying." And then she told us, "You don't know so and so is in jail. You don't know that they have one hundred in jail in Long Beach?" And the other woman ^{Sadie} who had a concussion, I think it almost caused her to have another concussion. ~~that~~ information. And I was just startled. So then we were told that there had been a party membership meeting. No doubt I would have been at the meeting and would have been one of those arrested or maybe gotten away from there. I don't know. I was not there when it happened in Long Beach. ~~But~~ ^{Saturday} that night I was called into a meeting since this had been, as I explained before, the

Y. Communist Party was involved in something that had happened. We would have a joint meeting with some of our executive board if possible and discuss who would have to come out because he or she is ill, or whatever the case. Or they needed to have them on the outside because we are going to protest and do this and this and this and we need to have them here in consultation. ~~So~~ I was called to this meeting and the party organizer from San Francisco had come down too, sitting in on the deliberations, and it was the first time I knew who were among those arrested. I don't remember the names, but some of them were very prominent in the party. Others perhaps weren't known yet as having been communists. And who were we going to take out first, and what is the bail? And a writ of habeus corpus, ^{when} ~~how~~ ^{it} can ~~that~~ be filed? ^{Sense} ~~They~~ they can keep you seventy two hours without a specific charge on suspicion. ~~And the charge was suspicion~~ of violation of the California Criminal Syndicalism Act. So the then normal seventy two hour hold without bail and the threat of our attorneys ^{filing} ~~threatening~~ a writ of habeus corpus, ^{would hasten their release}. Then we went on trying to raise the bail and getting the people out down the list. Two weeks after I ^{came} ~~was~~ out, ^{if} ~~there~~ ^{hospital there} ~~was~~ still a number of ~~them~~ in jail, and we were still working on raising bail, ^{when} ~~and~~ I collapsed. ~~And~~ it turned out that I had a broken nose which wasn't discovered in the hospital, ~~And~~ I had to have immediate plastic surgery because ~~of~~ ^{to} the pressure of the bone on my optical nerve hadn't been corrected right then and there - so I was out, ^{of action} ~~again~~ for a while. But some of ~~them~~ were out on bail so they were able to take over. As a result I didn't get ~~down~~ to Long Beach very often. That ^{was} ~~is~~ what happened to me personally. But of course calling up and seeing if so and so was going down on bail or calling up so and so and

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Y. seeing if he or she could give property, had they been contacted? That was it rather than the direct appearance in any court of in any district attorney's office to post bail, or what have you.

K. It was a terrible thing there in Long Beach, I understand, for a while.

Y. Yes, and there were a number of deportation cases as a result. A fairly large group of Japanese were deported. But the International Labor Defense obtained voluntary departure to a country of their own choice rather than sending them say to Greece or China or Japan where they really would have faced long prison terms or maybe even death because of having been deported from the United States on the charges of ~~having been~~ ^{undesireable} communists, aliens and communists.

K. What about the American Civil Liberties Union? They were involved in that to a certain extent, weren't they?

Y. Very small extent if I can remember correctly. I believe Leo Gallagher, who was the chief counsel of the I.L.D. in California at the time, and Al Wirin, Abraham Lincoln Wirin, were law partners. But they soon came to a parting of the way because some of the A.C.L.U. thought they shouldn't have anything to do with communists; they shouldn't have anything to do with this; they shouldn't have anything to do with that. They were very selective. In other words, they did not go across the board. If there were one hundred and eight arrested, all one hundred and eight except for those who were proven to be stool pigeons, ~~were the ones they should defend~~ ^{but not so according to the A.C.L.U.} There were a couple of agents among those who were arrested, but it didn't take too long to expose them. The agent provocateurs were nothing new to be used against those who were attempting to maintain their rights.

K. OK. Now there is another thing that I want to know if you were involved in. In 1932 there were two

K. hundred Mexicans ~~were~~ arrested in Santa Ana, and only six of them were actually aliens. Did you play a part in that at all?

Y. I may have sent a protest to the Department of Labor, which the Immigration Bureau was part of at that time. It is no longer under the Department of Labor. It is under the Justice Department. I may have spoken if there was a protest meeting at that time. As a more active part, I don't recall.

K, I was just curious because the whole matter of Mexican people working in the fields is not new, and there was a lot of that going on, especially in Southern California.

Y. Yes, and in Imperial Valley and along the coast. And always the threat. And no doubt the growers had a big hand to do with it because it came always toward the end of the season when it was time to pay off with all the bonuses and what have you that the swooping down by Immigration Department seemed to happen. It didn't happen when the harvest was going full swing. ~~And a~~ good many of ~~them~~ were cheated out of their wages and things like that because that was before even the N.R.A. [National Recovery act] yet, you know where they were given ~~poor~~ rights. Although I don't think the agricultural workers were given a right to organize because benefits were not extended to them that were afterwards extended to ^{other workers} - domestic workers and salespeople in the big department stores were also exempt. That's where Senator Goldwater made all of his money underpaying salesgirls in Arizona which ~~was~~ ^{is} a Right to Work state. (laughter).

K. Let's see now. On the Lodi grape strike eleven people were charged with conspiracy to obstruct the law. What did that mean?

Y. I don't know what section of the penal code it was, but I think the charges were afterwards lowered. And one of the people that I bailed out. I don't know

- Y. whether I told you or not, that story going in where there was a blockade.
- K. Yes.
- Y. So that was to go and post the bail.
- K. That was the Lodi grape strike?
- Y. I believe that it was. There were so many strikes there. There again it was probably one of those undefined sections in some local area. And then you have to fight it. I don't believe they went to trial on those charges though. I think the charges were changed to refusing to move or disturbing the peace or trespassing. I don't recall all the details because, frankly, up in Northern California there were just literally hundreds of cases and a lot of them never even came to trial.
- K. I know in the first interviews we picked out the key ones, but there are certain others I wanted to ask you about. Like I didn't even know that the I.L.D. was involved in the Hart lynching case in San Jose.* How did it happen that the I.L.D. got involved?

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Counter #1

- xx K. The Hart case in San Jose was not a labor case, and that is why I wondered how the ILD got involved.
- Y. It was a case that if not protested immediately by people in the area would lead to other lynchings people being dragged out of jail. If they had a Mexican American in jail - if there was no protest as to what had happened and how lax the police and others were, the same thing could happen in ^{other} California jail, if it wasn't immediately protested. Certainly it was a violation of Hart's right ^{not} to have a trial ^{regardless} of the charges. Or if he had already been convicted (at this point I don't remember all the details) was on appeal and couldn't be out on bail, maybe didn't have bail.

I really don't remember. So we organized a protest
*Dept. store owners son kidnapped and held for ransom. Body found mutilated. Two men involved. One admitted guilt. Lynched by mob.

Y. meeting and had a protest meeting in the Park [St. James Park in San Jose] pointing out that this was similar to what was happening to the Negroes in South, ~~because~~ (we did not call them Blacks at that time,) and how many lynchings there had been up to date in the South, because we had all those statistics. And do we want to emulate what took place in the South and deny the civil rights of people. It was on that basis that we took up the issue and protested - to try and avoid similar actions regardless of what the initial charge was against the person involved. It was a question of trying to maintain the rights as spelled out by our Constitution and the Bill of Rights.

K. Who else spoke besides you?

Y. There was, I believe, an attorney. I don't remember which one it was, and there were some people from San Jose, from that area. I believe there were about four speakers. I believe there was someone from a church, but I don't recall all that. And nowhere do I have a copy of the leaflet or anything else that we might have issued.

K. Do you remember how you were received there?

Y. Well there was quite a crowd in the park to protest. There were a few hecklers. That was true of almost any protest meeting we had whether it was in a hall or outdoors. And there were quite a number of people who came up from other areas, Mountain View and Santa Cruz, who came and attended the meeting. We tried to mobilize as many people in the area as a protest that something like that could ^{not} happen in the State of California, ^{again} as ^{no doubt} happened in San Jose. But that was in collaboration of some of the deputy sheriffs - with some of the ~~lynchers~~ police that were supposed to have been on duty at the time.

K. You became an honorary member of the Cigar Workers

K. Union. Was this because of the help they got when they went on strike?

Y. And the help that the ILD as a whole gave; that I particularly gave by addressing their meetings in a protest and seeing that their attorneys were there and getting bail. Actually I think it was a tribute to the ILD rather than to me personally although I was the one who got it. And the same thing happened in the Cleaners and Dyers Union. I was also made an honorary member after a strike they had. And that was an AF of L Union.

K. This confuses me about the Cigar Workers, it was an AF of L Union, but there was a TUUL picket line.

Y. It was a joint picket line. It was the support of the TUUL at the time. This was before there was a CIO and it was before - the TUUL didn't just support their own strikes. They didn't have locals in every union, and they supported strikes. Although the TUUL was started by the communist party there were a lot of members who were not communists. And they supported strikes of workers trying to better their conditions, so they supported that strike.

K. I am sorry to ask you so many detailed questions, but so many things happened during that period, I am asking the things that were most dramatic - that I thought you might remember. One of the things was the arrest of Callahan and Tucker and the role of the Catholic Priest in getting ^{Mexican} workers to accept suspended sentences. Do you remember that case - the cherry pickers in 1933.

Y. There were several. I don't recall that one in particular. But there were several instances that happened like that where certain people were sent in. They didn't necessarily have to be a Catholic priest. It could have been a Methodist ^{minister} ~~priest~~ or someone from the union, from the executive board, advising them they would get off easier if they pled guilty and took a suspended sentence, but it

- Y. didn't turn out to be a suspended sentence much to the surprise of the worker who followed the advice, that he or she would have to do time, and in a good many instances not even get time off. So many dramatic things happened in the thirties that sometimes you just lose sight in one area - perhaps there were so few in the end that were involved, you had maybe fourteen or fifteen facing forty three years in jail, and you paid more attention to them rather than someone else, ~~because you gave the initial attention to someone~~ who was at the most facing thirty days. on a misdemeanor. So that there was all this going on. And perhaps someone else was detailed to go down to Mountain View. I didn't do all the out of town going. We had an executive Board. It would have been impossible because there were four or five strikes going on in Pescadero and in San Luis Obispo, in Stockton, because the crops were coming up at the same time. Unfortunately now if we had some of the different scrapbooks that were maintained, if we had them by year and by date, and had a little reference that I could look back and say, "Here is one - it was Charles Gordon who went down in 1933." Because he was on the executive board. As I am saying it wasn't just I who went.
- K. There is something we didn't go into because I didn't have a tape recorder then, up in the gold country you mentioned a senator or congressman who was making a speech more radical than yours?
- Y. It was an Assemblymen.
- K. Where was this?
- Y. In Nevada City in the fall after a big AFL organized daravan had gone up, in 1936, had gone up to Nevada City with food, money and clothing that had been collected for the strikers, and before we even got to Nevada City we were escorted by highway patrolmen. We were taken off the road and sort of stopped. I have forgotten how many trucks and cars were in

- Y. this caravan. I was in a car driven by Joe White, a Black longshoreman -
- K. Yes, you told me that story.
- Y. Then, after the arrests and the attack by the sheriff's department, we held a protest meeting. I believe it was about a month after in Nevada City. The speakers were George Anderson, one of the ILD ~~xxx~~ attorneys, Sam Yorty, Assemblyman, and Tinney, T-I-N-N-E-Y. I believe he was as assemblyman then, or had already become a state Senator. We were the four ^{outside} speakers, and someone from the union. And Yorty got up and spoke. I had never met him before that. It was a meeting called by the Local and the ILD jointly. And he delivered an address that was, in my eyes, so radical that I turned to George Anderson and said, "Who's supposed to be 'the Red', quote ~~and~~ unquote, on this platform?" "I wouldn't say things like he's saying." and so that was my introduction to Yorty, and I don't have to tell you what Yorty turned out to be. He was elected on the EPIC ticket, which was the Upton Sinclair ticket, and a liberal Democrat, and he became one of the most vicious, Although a Democrat, quote, unquote, he called himself, was always endorsing people like Nixon, and did become the Mayor of Los Angeles. And a lot of his escapades have been exposed as have our august president's. He is no longer in political life in Los Angeles. He has ~~been~~ retired. Tinney died some years ago. In fact Yorty and Tinney became the witch hunters ala Mc Carthy here in California.
- K. The Yorty committee?
- Y. This was before he was on the Yorty Committee - when he was a "liberal", quote, unquote. So that I have spoken with people with whom I would rather not pass the time of day so to say. They are so rabid in their theories.
- K. Mooney, did you know his sister, Rita?
- Y. Anna, Rita was his wife.
- K. Oh, Anna Mooney, yes.

Y. Mother Mooney went with Mrs. Ada Wright, the mother of two of the Scottsboro boys, on a tour of Europe that was arranged by the International Labor Defense, and the International Red Aid. So her son didn't object to his case being tied in with another case. He was willing, and she was considerably older than Mrs. Wright, to go with the mother of two young Negroes. (We did call them boys because they were under voting age, but it isn't a term that we use now unless somebody is really very small). At thirteen I think it is pretty young to be charged with rape and face

- Y. death at the end of a rope. So she did go. And Anna, too, wherever there were joint meetings, she didn't stay away from them. But as far as I know they came to meetings where the Mooney case was part of the agenda. I don't recall them coming to a meeting just on one issue, against war and fascism for instance. I don't recall them coming. They may have come to a meeting called by the League Against War and Fascism if they also said here, what we have to do is Free Tom Mooney. And I suppose you know that our son is named for him.
- K. Yes. Well, this is another thing. I am asking this because as a result of the Imperial Valley cases N. Nishimura was held in Angel Island for over a year. There were two Japanese people, Nishimura and Horiuchi, and Carl Sklar, were you involved in this case?
- Y. Nishimura was from San Francisco and he was an editor of a paper. He was arrested up here and not in Imperial Valley. He ^{as were} arrested as an undesirable alien, a communist, ~~xxxx~~ about twenty other Japanese. And Horiuchi - as you were saying - I don't recall Nishimura being on Angel Island that long. I believe he was out on bail.
- K. The paper said for a year.
- Y. Maybe on appeal they didn't allow bail, denied bail. They don't have to say you can be out on bail. They didn't have to. Or they could put it so high in the heart of the depression that it would be impossible to put that amount of money up on one person. Usually bail was about a thousand dollars each on deportations; and then if they were illegal aliens the charge was a little higher because it was two charges. But Horiuchi had spend two and a half years in Folsom prison on the criminal syndicalism charge. And then I believe the appeal was won for all of them so that they came out and he was deported, I believe it was the end of thirty two, with seventeen others who left. I believe one of them was Greek, Peter Panagapolis. There were seventeen Japanese and Horiuchi

- Y. was one of them. And they weren't all from Southern California. I believe there were a couple of others from Northern California brought down to to be part of ~~them~~ ^{those leaving}. An order of voluntary departure had been granted. And the Soviet Union had granted them entrance there ~~and~~ ^{which} they accepted ~~it~~. ~~And~~ ^{That's} where they went, but what has happened to them since, there was no communication after they got there. So that what has happened to the deportees. And not all, as I say, were from Imperial Valley. There was Hariuchi from Imperial Valley, and there were a couple of South Americans who took voluntary departure back; left on their own rather than go as deportees. One of them was a Filipino, and we don't know what happened to him when he was released. He may have gone back to the Philippines on his own. Some of them were able to work that out where they left on their own rather than to have a charge against them. Very few, I only recall one Japanese who went ~~by himself~~ back to Japan ^{on his own}.
- K. I was going to ask you too, were you involved in the C.S. case at all. It was such a big campaign, meetings and so on.
- Y. Oh yes, I attended most of the large rallies wherever they were and spoke. Also helped to arrange some meetings; helped arrange bail; had some words with the ACLU up here about who should be bailed out, because they offered bail, but they wanted to select the people that they wanted to bail out, and our policy was that the organization involved should have a say as to who they think should come out first, give reasons and then have a discussion, so that they did bail out a couple of the defendabts.
- K. Did they agree?
- Y. No, they didn't agree to go by our list. They put up the bail for two defendants as I recall, and then we arranged the bail for the others. Of course they were convicted and the women went to Tehachapai, the men to San Quentin. And while they were there the appeal went on. And we helped organize the appeal.

Y. And our attorneys presented the briefs in the case to the court. In the meantime we started a campaign - had a big conference with a lot of trade unions attending - to circulate a petition to repeal the criminal syndicalism law. And during that campaign to get signatures of registered voters there were arrests in different areas. And I was arrested on March 17th, 1935, in Mission Dolores Park. And so was Leo Gallagher on that campaign. The meeting was called by the I.L.D. and I wasn't scheduled as a speaker that day.

K. Oh yes.

Y. That was March 17th when I was wearing a green coat and hat and they said I was wearing green because it was St. Patrick's Day. And that entailed several trials. Two trials for me - one trial and then a retrial. And during the course of that trial I did my only time, and that was twenty hours for contempt, but I did it (I don't know whether I went into that in detail or not) like one hour and twenty minutes and I made sure the County jail matron put down that one hour and twenty minutes on my time.

K. Why did you go then?

Y. I refused to give the address, my address, on the basis that I had my home raided once. I wasn't about to have that occur again. I refused also because there was this question that in the Modesto case the judge had ruled that the agent provocateur, the stool pigeon who was paid by the shipowners, and kept in a hotel, refused to divulge the hotel and who was paying for him because he was in fear of his life. And the court ruled that he did not have to. When I was tried it was a misdemeanor and not a felony, it was a question of trying to get it tested to see how courts could differ, and then the higher court reject one and accept the other reason. When it was the shipowners paying the bill and when it was my own home, my own life, I had no right because I was being charged with refusing to move one, disturbing the

Y. peade, and things like that. So that was the reason for the appeal, and each time that it went up on appeal I had to turn myself in until new bail was posted. And when I was in county jail I made sure that there was an hour or two hours ~~there~~ ^{was down} so that when the twenty hours were over and the conviction was upheld - in the meantime I had taken, been a delegate to the International Labor Defense convention held in Washington, D.C. ^{in 1937} and was then elected as ~~a Pacific~~ ^{Coast} Vice President. Vito Marcantonio, a Congressman from New York, was the President of the International Labor Defense and presided at this convention. Anna Damon was the International Labor Defense Secretary. We had greetings from President Roosevelt congratulating us on the work we were doing in behalf of civil rights. And I came back and did some more time, and then the retrial and all that.

K. Did you finally put in the full twenty hours?

Y. Yes. I may have gotten an hour off for good time. I really don't remember, but anyway I had paid my dues to society. So although I had been convicted about four different times my appeals were won and new trials - I did spend three weeks in jail in thirty four because of the high bail during the vigilante raids. My conviction record and time spent for that was twenty hours.

K. There is something here I don't quite understand, and it is something we just talked about, the Dolores Park meeting. Free speech had been won for Columbia Park and Jefferson Park, but it hadn't been won for Dolores Park. Was there a campaign?

Y. Meetings were held right along, on election campaigns, on different protests, whatever was the campaign of the day, in different parks. Speakers in all these parks had been arrested time after time. I was arrested in Jefferson Park in thirty four when I was speaking on the vigilante terror. There had been a constant campaign to try and maintain free speech through street corner meetings, through meetings in parks,

Y. through publicized meetings in halls. We were constantly being raided by the so called red squad or intelligence bureau.

K. How did you establish free speech in Columbus Park and Jefferson Park then?

Y. By constant meetings and constant arrests and winning the cases - cases being thrown out, sometimes not even coming to court on the basis of the evidence they had. Maybe after two years of fighting to be able to conclude a speech in Columbus Park, then the person wasn't arrested although the meetings had been publicized. That's how you knew you had won the right to free speech. Jefferson Park the same way. After innumerable arrests year after year regardless of what the subject matter was, if it was called by the International Labor Defense or the Communist Party, or an election campaign, or some workers on strike, and there had been arrest after arrest, and there would be protest after protest, and then when you could go and fulfill your meetings, and have three speakers or two speakers, or have a skit, when you had accomplished that then you knew there had been enough mobilization and protest against the harrassment and denial of your right to free speech. In Mission Dolores Park which was surrounded by ~~one~~ church on one side and the most famous Church, Mission Dolores, on the other side, it came about a little harder. You probably already had the right to speak, presumably had the right to speak in the other parks when we got to Mission Dolores. Then the arrests and harrassment were there all over again.

K. Did you finally win it there?

Y. There are meetings going on there today, as protests, and the foundation, I believe, was laid in the campaign ~~against~~ to repeal the criminal syndicalism law and free those who were in jail at that time. No, I was arrested ^{not} in 1937. I'm sorry. I was arrested in 1935, but the case hung on so long

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- Y. that in thirty seven I was still doing some time on it. I think I am getting two cases mixed up. The thirty seven arrest was picketing at the California Hotel [hall] where the swastika was flying day and night and where the bund was having a convention and where we were picketing what was happening in Spain, the Nazi's help to Franco. And that's when this contempt of court came about. I was arrested with ~~in~~ in thirty five, that was the Mission Dolores thing. Leo was still in court in Sacramento, but had come down to speak. There had been a meeting held to repeal the criminal syndicalism and to try to get the case dismissed against the criminal syndicalism victims, the Sacramento criminal syndicalism victims. So that he was in Sacramento and came to San Francisco that week end. But I've got the two mixed up where I did the contempt.
- K. If I had had the kind of life you did I would get mixed up too.
- Y. But that was it. My contempt was ^{for the trial} around when we were picketing the bund.

End of tape

Interview with Elaine Black Yoneda - second series
Date of Interview - June 24, 1977
367 Elsie Street, SF Cal.

Tape Seven

- K. Elaine - there are a couple of questions that, when I was typing the transcript, I realized I hadn't asked. One of them is, how did the attorneys get paid?
- Y. Well, it wasn't a set fee because in certain cases they got no fee at all. It depended upon the length of the case, the amount of time they had to put in, whether there were appeals and briefs they had to prepare. We would raise funds around certain issues. There was really no set case ^{fee} - ~~now~~ if there was a felony ^{charge} it was going to be so much, and a simple misdemeanor is going to be that much. We played it by ear, and especially when court costs were heavy, filing fees and what have you, sometimes the attorneys didn't get their just due. They really - it was a labor of love for most of them. I really don't recall any set fee in any case. In the case of a number of defendants it was a different ~~case~~ also, depending on how many in the group were defending themselves and how many the attorney had to defend. It isn't like now when you pay so much a month retainer or so much per day. That wasn't true in the thirties.
- K. What was the age of most of the attorneys?
- Y. They were fairly young, and then there were older mostly men like Leo Gallagher. He was the oldest among the ILD attorneys. He was a professor of law for a long time.
- K. I am trying to think about the difference between then and now as far as all the young lawyers in the poverty law centers.
- Y. There weren't things like law centers in those days. Either you got an attorney who was in a firm or through some organization like the ACLU or the ILD, and the ILD had a number of attorneys in the larger centers, like San Francisco and Seattle, there were attorneys and assistants to attorneys

Y. who would help out in certain cases. And there were a few young ones here. Some of them went sour and some of them have become millionaires in their own right now. They got their start in the ILD, and then when unions began having their own defense committees they were ~~retained~~ on retainers.

K. OK. The other question I missed was - What were the tactics the mounted police used in trying to contain or disrupt a demonstration?

Y. Their horses were trained, I suppose when they pulled on the bridle or strap they would move in and if there was an object there to press up against a building or against a car. If you weren't watching you wouldn't know how they got them there, but they got their flank against you and pressed you against a car or a building. There must have been some manipulation when they pulled this way the horse would just move and his flank would press you against the car or the building. And usually the backside rather than the horse's head would come in touch with you. It was that part of their body that pressured you. It was a very funny feeling to find yourself almost crushed up against a building because they would come right up on the sidewalk. And sometimes, the cars at that time had running boards, and if you were against the running board rather than the fender it would catch you around your ankles, and you would feel the pressure.

K. Why did they do this?

Y. That was to stop and try to disperse a demonstration, to break it up. And some of the cops were also wielding a club from the other end, and some were throwing tear gas, or had their buddies on the side who were throwing tear gas into the crowd. It was a way of harrassment. It was a way they had trained their horse force.

K. Were there horses in most of the demonstrations you were involved in?

Y. In the early thirties there were lots of horse cops. Now there are a few in Golden Gate Park. But in the thirties (there are pictures) you can see these cops on the horses riding down another demonstration to disperse it, saying ^{it was an} illegal assembly. We were there petitioning for the freedom of Tom Mooney, and it's an illegal assembly! The most vivid one that I remember was the May 26, 1933 one in Portsmouth Square which is across the street from the ^{old} Hall of Justice [now the site of the Holiday Inn] and the trial of Tom Mooney was going on. There were several outstanding indictments ^{on} and Mooney kept demanding that he be re-tried to bring out new evidence, because ^{on} murder charges it is never too late. There is no ^{time} limitation ^{to be tried} on them that they ^{become} are no longer ^{valid} valid. ^{so} So ^{of the} this was one time that he was brought back to San Francisco ⁱⁿ Hall of Justice ⁱⁿ and ⁱⁿ the County Jail ^{and around} the trial was being held on Kearney Street and there was a big demonstration. It was a different situation than it is now. It was a little more level and there weren't playgrounds (not that they don't need ^{them} in Chinatown). But it looked different and you could have a big demonstration, a very large demonstration. Then somebody said it was an illegal assemblage and they began clubbing and the police force on horses began shoving people up against buildings and ^{up} against cars. Sometimes they just rode along with the march or the demonstration and didn't attack. It varied. It depended upon what the issue was how vicious they could become.

K. How did you combat these tactics?

Y. It's difficult to fight against a horse that's towering over you to begin with, and then a man sitting on it with a club that could really smash your brains out because you are underneath. So it was rather difficult. I guess the natural thing would be to try to get out from under as quickly as possible, and that of course would have an effect on the rest of the assemblage. You know if they see someone running, and you are running away

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Y. that could smash your brains, from what could be a very vicious attack, that could leave you crippled for life if they hit in certain places. There are many instances, I guess written up in different areas, not just in San Francisco where such tactics did work ⁱⁿ immobilizing a large group of people like tear gas or shooting into the ranks of the workers.

K. That's sort of what I wanted to know. I just have a few more general questions on your activities in the I.L.D. We discussed the Louise Todd-Anita Whitney case when Todd went to Tehachapai. In reading the P.W. [People's World] I found there was a mention of a woman named Myers who had been arrested for the same thing, but was let go, and there were other people who did the same thing Louise Todd did but weren't jailed. Why was this?

Y. There were secret indictments ^{as} I recall with names not publicized for a while. I think there were about seven others in that case. Now she may have been released because they found that some of the ^{picked} petitions ^{evidence} they accused her of having falsified were actually petitions that she had circulated and therefore there would probably be overwhelming evidence that she really had not committed a felony, ^{so} that I believe ^{that} was the ^{Myers} case. Now the others, some left the state, and I don't think this was an offense that they could ^{be} extradited ^{you}. Although it was a felony charge it wasn't what could be called a danger to any person. So some of them left the state and stayed away ~~from the state~~ until there was no longer a valid warrant against them. They didn't disappear off the face of the earth. They just were no longer in California so they couldn't be extradited. It would take a real major charge, even in this reactionary set up, to get you extradited. So that Anita and Louise were the only two that ^{a sentence} were actually jailed and Anita got one day less than a year or one month less than ^{I forget which} a year so ^{in order} to serve in the county jail, ^{or pay} and a fine, and her ~~name~~

Y. nephew, ^{jail} after she was in, ~~posted the bail~~ much against her wish. ~~He~~ paid the fine and she was released.

K. I guess she had a time with him.

Y. Yes she had a time with him and his reactionary activities and doing things she didn't want done on her behalf.

K. And yet they were very fond of each other.

Y. Oh, yes. But when it came to those things she said, "I am my own person and I do it my way", but I guess when the fine was posted the judge had nothing else to do but leave her out. And of course Louise ^{the woman's state prison and later} went on to be let out on probation. I guess you have all that.

K. Yes. The other thing was, and we have discussed this a good deal already, on Assembly Bill #419 to repeal the Criminal Syndicalism law, there was a tremendous campaign of conferences and rallies and meetings, etc. What part did you play in this?

Y. There was also a petition campaign where only registered voters could sign, and that would have put it on the ballot. And the I.L.D. helped draw up the petition and get ^{it} the OK ^{out} by the Secretary of State and circulate it around up and down the state. ~~And my~~ activities were to see that the petitions got out, that people were going out to get signatures, that the same error that occurred in putting the party on the ballot in thirty four did not re-occur*, and as soon as the signatures were in to get copies made and see if some of those who had signed the petition would be willing to take out a petition, and having rallies and meetings up and down the state to get this on the ballot, and at the

*The Todd Whitney case when they were accused of signing that they had obtained ^{certain} the signatures when they had not actually done so.

Y. same time plugging away on letters to the Assembly that the Assembly Bill be passed and be signed by the Governor. So there were simultaneous actions that if it didn't pass the ^{Legislature} Assembly we could come up with the required number of signatres to put it on the ballot. ~~So~~ There were a number of rallies and speaking tours which I participated in. And part of the campaign also led to my arrest in the Mission Dolores Park on March 17th, 1935. It was part of that campaign.

K. Now there were a lot of stories about brutality in San Quentin. As a leader in the I.L.D. what was your relationship to doing something about that?

Y. Organized letter writing to the warden, the Governor and the prison authorities against the harrassment or whatever the issue was. Some of them were being put in the hole*. Political prisoners would tell us, so and so has been punished because he did this and this, and we ought to see that he is gotten out of the hole. Sometimes it would not be a political prisoner who was in the hole, but it was because a prisoner may have been kind to a political prisoner that led to his being picked out for disciplinary action.

They did try to isolate the political prisoners, the labor prisoners from the others.

K. How did they do that?

Y. They would have them in separate cells, tell a prisoner who would come in, "Now don't associate with that gang of C.S.'ers. They are ^{dynamiters} ~~dynamers~~. They are this, or that. Don't associate with them. Don't associate with McNamara. Don't associate with Mooney or Schmitt."

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* Solitary confinement, often with limited food, bread and water, etc.

- Y. ~~Or if they would try to tell~~ McNamara was known as Uncle Jim by all the prisoners and I think admired by most of them because he was such a warm, kind human being and he tried to help everyone. Because some prisoners who had recourse to or had heard ~~about~~ that he was worth seeing and talking to, he would go out of his way to try and speak to that person. And that led to his being punished and shifted around. I have said this many times I don't think I have ever met a man of his calibre.
- K. I have heard that from other people.
- Y. He was just tremendous. And he told me some day we would learn not to name our children after the living, either Jim or Tom or whatever, but after someone who has gone on and really shown his or her worth.
- K. He was a very sharp man.
- Y. It is hard to pin point ~~it~~ but we would start a campaign that there was a reign of terror starting in San Quentin or Folsom by locking up so many in solitary or in the hole, threatening to take them off the little work they are doing so that they wouldn't go mad. ~~So~~ We participated in campaigns like that. As I say, some of them were not political prisoners, but most of them were men of color who were being punished. There was terrific segregation in the prisons. It is still true today, but it was even much more in the thirties.
- K. So you had campaigns around this issue then?
- Y. Yes, the unbearable conditions in jail.
- K. What was the result of these campaigns?
- Y. I am trying to think of the warden's name. I know his sister's married name was Turner, but I am trying to think of his name. Anyway he was the sort of man you could talk to and say, "you say you are for prison reform and yet this is happening right within your own walls. You have got some guards who should never have at his command a gun."

Y. And you talk about reform. Why don't you start reform against the hole, against the other things that you use. So we would have committees go and meet with him. There ^{were} ~~are~~ other wardens who would never open the door to you, if you came there with a petition or even an attorney about one specific person, not even an overall reform for the prison. Now Folsom was another situation where I was given permission (one of the few) to see Billings and also McNamara when he was in Folsom. McNamara was sometimes banished to Folsom because of his protests on what was happening in San Quentin. I was able to visit him. Now going to Folsom as a rule I didn't have anyone else go with me because they weren't allowed in. And it was a costly trip. Somebody would have to drive me because I wasn't driving at that time. I didn't drive until 1953. I was a late starter. But to San Quentin when we went, unless there was something specific about a case and I had to see certain defendants, we would always go with hopefully enough to see those who hadn't been visited the week before so that they would have one visit a month from the San Francisco area. We had people, men and women, who, on their days off, holidays and things, would sign up to go to San Quentin to visit. And that was part of the I.L.D. task to get such groups ready. Of course visiting dignitaries ^{- out of country labor leaders, etc -} ~~these~~ arrangements ¹ ~~were~~ special.

K. Can you remember any case where the campaign to stop San Quentin brutality was successful?

Y. I can't. That is a forty years ^{ago} it is rather difficult. I believe in some cases where the prisoners, ~~their~~ mail was withheld, we were able to have the mail flowing in again. There was always a constant fight to allow ⁱⁿ reading material ^{for} political prisoners, labor prisoners, whether it was their own union paper that was banned, or some political publication. So that ^{was} ~~that~~ was

- Y. a constant fight - to denounce ^{the} censorship of newspapers and printed matter. ~~coming in.~~
- K. Yes, Louise told me an interesting story about that about someone spilling ink on something and sending it in. There must have been techniques like that being used.
- Y. There may have been.
- K. OK then. There is another big case I am sure that you remember. That's about the Archie Brown case, where someone jumped out of a window, or something, and three people, members of the Scalpers Union, were arrested for murder.
- Y. The I.L.D. was very active in that case, in the defense. And if you would read the Western Worker, or the People's World, you would see in little boxes that the trial was going on, and on such and such a date there would be a hearing, and on such and such a date there would be the question of bail. And when the actual trial ^{began} ~~came~~ on leaflets were issued in Spanish and in English calling upon people ^{for} support, because the other two were -
- K. Yes, Natalio and Jiminez - Canales.
- Y. What we would call Chicanos now. At that time it was Mexican-Americans.
- K. There were actually four, Archie Brown, Julius Canales, Francisco Jiminez and Natalio Velle.
- Y. Yes, four altogether. Of course we won that case, and it was quite a victory for the Ship Scalpers which was in the lowest category of those under the I.L.A. Banner [International Longshoremen's Association]. They were the men who chipped off the paint and did the very menial things on ships.. Their pay was even lower than the longshoremen which wasn't very high in those days either, in the thirties.
- K. Was this what started your long term relationship with Local 2, the Scalpers?

- Y. I don't know if that's what started it. I am not too sure. I think they were part of the I.L.A., ~~then and later, then it became~~ ^{draw} part of the C.I.O. and the ~~Warehousemen and all.~~ They were part of the I.L.A.- a unit under it. ~~I am trying to think.~~
- K. What was your relationship with the Scalpers?
- Y. The Ship Scalpers were an affiliate to the I.L.D. They affiliated to the I.L.D. and paid a certain amount per month affiliation ^{dues} ~~and~~ ^A after ~~the~~ Archie Brown, et al case, whenever any other case or issue came up, a speaker, whether it was myself or someone else, was always welcome to come and explain it, at their meeting, or come to their executive board and say, now we are going to have a demonstration for so and so - their members, after they had reported ^{to the hiring hall if} ~~and~~ there was no work, would come out to the demonstration. If ~~the~~ garment makers were out on strike and the I.L.D. was handling the ~~defense and there was a case,~~ we would announce it, their members would come out. So it wasn't that they just confined themselves to ship scaler activities. They were broadening out on the I.L.W.U. motto, "An injury to one is an injury to all." They participated in different community cases as well.
- K. Why did they make you an honorary member, or did they?
- Y. You see there were quite a number of unions. I think that is one of them that made me an honorary member. I think because of my activity, not so much my own personal activity, the I.L.D. activity which I helped organize around that case, informing their members. Some of them couldn't read, just being patient with them, saying "what you do when under arrest. This is what you've got to remember. ~~So we~~ held some classes on that, what to do when under arrest. These were ^{mainly} ~~A~~ foreign born workers who did not read and write english and could not afford

Y. to have attorneys come in and tell them what their rights were. ~~And~~ They were appreciative of what the I.L.D. stood for and did.

K. Let's see. There is one more I.L.D. question and that is in September of 1941 Festus Louis Coleman was accused of attacking a woman in Golden Gate Park, was arrested for rape.

Y. Is that the one with the two soldiers?

K. Yes.

Y. She was on a blanket with two soldiers and it was easier for her to holler rape and point to Festus and say "He's the one who did it," rather than the two soldiers. Of course that entailed a battle also. He would probably have been sent to San Quentin or Folsom for life if they had convicted him of that charge. And there was a large community campaign to release him.

K. That leads to another question. How did he find out about the I.L.D., or did you seek him out?

Y. I think a friend of his, if I remember correctly, someone who knew him, ~~if I remember correctly~~ (I may be wrong) ~~he~~ had come to some I.L.D. rallies, park meetings. And ~~some one~~ ^{then} came ^{to the office} and said "This is a rank frame up. This is just like they have in the south and if we don't protect him he's going to face long years in jail and he's no more guilty than I am." And why didn't they also hold the two soldiers for questioning and find out what was at the bottom of it." So there was a campaign, ~~as I say~~, and at the same time there was a campaign going on to try to keep us out of the war. So there was a very diverse fight - campaign, and I've forgotten ~~who specifically~~, which branch ^{of} the I.L.D. was specifically assigned to keep on top of the case. There were so many different actions going on that at times we would say, now look, The Fillmore Branch, or the Tom Mooney Branch, or the Negura Branch, ~~or whatever branch~~ has to keep on top of this and keep us informed. Because after

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Y. all the district office had the whole Northern California area, ~~and~~ ^{with} things popping all around. At times we couldn't keep on top of a case that was centered in ~~the~~ city where there were ^{no} branches, ~~and~~ ^{whereas} we had several in San Francisco. ~~but~~ ¹ it took some doing. But of course without an organization like the I.L.D. coming into the case and picking up things - Second side of tape

Counter #1

K. How did activities like the activities in behalf of Festus Louis Coleman pay off in membership and development of the I.L.D.?

Y. The I.L.D. was really an organization that had grown tremendously and had a lot of people who were just civil libertarians. I hate to use that word, libertarians, but they were really on the side of civil liberties, men and women who did not necessarily join the I.L.D. as such but would open up their homes for teas and have art exhibits for a benefit on a specific case. Or if we had big mass meetings in the civic auditorium to free Tom Mooney or the "Scottsboro Boys we would have it filled. It wouldn't be an empty hall. And we would be able to get men like Theodore Dreiser to come out on a national tour to speak on behalf of Mooney or the Scottsboro Boys and things like that. Of course a case like Festus Coleman which was more local we would go into the neighborhood from which that particular defendant came from and try to arouse his or her neighbors. ~~because~~ if something happened, say in Jefferson Park, we would concentrate in that area.

K. Did people join the I.L.D. in that area because of your activities?

Y. Oh, yes, because of the activities and the neighborhood activities. I would find myself riding on a streetcar sometimes and ~~i was~~ ^{people} wondering why ~~they~~ were staring, and maybe that was the day my picture was in the All Bull, or the Call Bulletin -

K. What did you call it, the All Bull?

Y. The All Bull. I always wore a button, In fact ^{wore it even} when

Y. we appeared in court, "Boycott Hearst Press". That was a campaign we were in ~~back of too~~ because the Hearst press was a racist press, and anti labor, anti civil rights, and the All Bull was ^a ~~the~~ Hearst ~~paper~~, a segment of the Hearst empire.

K. Well, I think I've milked you dry on this, I'm not sure. but there are some general questions I didn't ask at the end of the last interview and I want to piece out the interview with this. Why weren't you ever receptive to the idea of being an attorney?

Y. First of all I think it came a little too late in my activities.

K. You were under thirty.

Y. Well, the first offer was by Professor Radin offering to see that I was accepted in Law school even though I didn't have a high school ~~education~~ diploma. There were certain rules and regulations which I didn't understand ^{whereby} ~~that~~ you ^{could} take a ~~certain~~ test and have certain knowledge you are able to ^{enter law school} ~~and~~ By the way in high school I had taken latin and french which he thought was an asset although I hadn't used it in many years. ^{Also} ~~And~~ he felt that I had the poise to be an attorney. I didn't think so. So I said no to his offer because I felt it would take me away from what I could see was an important period in the fight for workers rights with the Roosevelt administration bringing in certain regulations and rules that you could try to organize a union and that there certainly would be forces that would try to keep people from organizing into unions and obtaining better living conditions. It would be taking away from a period where we might see certain successes in carrying out desires for better living conditions for all and the fight against discrimination. So that was ~~the~~ reason. ^{ing} Then in thirty-eight, I believe it was, when Teresa Meikle and Edith Wilson from the D.A.'s [District Attorney's] office ^{made an} ~~offered me~~, the conditions were to get out of the movement and then they would see that I was financed and would be able to become

Y. an attorney. That was not a condition that Radin had put to me, but of course he did say that it would take lots of study and work on my part which might curtail my activities, not ~~be~~ dropped but curtailed. But theirs was ~~an~~ absolute saying that I was going to drop out and renounce the movement, and I have never done that. There have been a lot of faults in the movement and around the periphery, but I certainly wouldn't renounce it. I would fight against some of the things, but I certainly wouldn't renounce it,

K. This question follows then. Did you ever feel you were giving up something by being radical, that your life would have taken a different course or you would have been happier in another way?

Y. I don't see it from that angle. I've enjoyed (I didn't enjoy seeing people put in jail) my association with attempting to better conditions. I don't go along with a lot of faults in this democratic nation. There are still the Wilmington Ten right now in North Carolina and all sorts of other cases that are going on that merit my activity in their behalf and I have indicated that I thought it was an error that the I.L.D. ~~was~~ folded instead of keeping even a skeletal organization in different areas where it had become an important factor. As a result, some of these cases that come up, you had to start from scratch which often causes a delay in obtaining freedom or release of people who are in jail.

K. Did you want your children to follow in your footsteps to become active radicals?

Y. I did not try to influence them one way or another, but when I was going to a meeting or going to speak someplace or going to a demonstration I certainly would inform them and invite them to come and join me, and especially in the fight against the Vietnam war they participated *fully*.

K. Did they follow in your footsteps?

Y. Neither one of them is in any organization. But our son is a member of the union of his trade. Joyce doesn't work, so she isn't in a union, but she was quite active in the Longshore Auxiliary for a period before she had the accident.

K. I was just trying to find out how children reacted. Some of them apparently went in the other direction. Yours didn't do that, did they?

Y. I don't know whether they concurred in all my activities or not, but they certainly aren't enemies, and they are aware of what is going on. And we have discussions, and we have never attempted to cover up any activities we have been involved in.

K. So you don't know whether they approve of what you and Karl do, or disapprove?

Y. I think there might be some things they disapprove of. Perhaps us giving as much time as we do, ~~and~~ although it has never been ^{expressed} ~~said~~ to us in that fashion. There was a time about ten years ago when Tom was playing around with "Progressive Labor", ^(PL) but he soon got disenchanted, but he was very active while living here in San Francisco and participating in ~~the~~ against Vietnam war demonstrations. And of course he did attempt to get exemption from the draft, so he fought against that. ~~And~~ He ended up not being drafted although I believe G-2 of the army and other agencies attempted to have him testify against us when he was at Stanford.

K. I wasn't going to ask you this question, as it seems like such a broad one, but what are some of your reflections on your activities and your successes.

Y. It wasn't all successes. There were a number of men and women who went to jail after our attempts to keep them out of ~~there~~ although the laws afterwards on which they were convicted were tossed out. I think it isn't just my successes. I think that

Y. it was the organization as a whole in that particular period.

K. Let's put it this way, would you have done anything differently if you had to do it over again?

Y. Perhaps the first nine years [laughter] when I was married to Ed would not have occurred. That's about the only thing I can really say, because I don't think I would have let it last that long with what I know today.

K. We all make some mistakes that way.

Y. That is probably one of the things I would have attempted to avoid, have it a couple of years instead of nine years.

K. What have you learned that you would like to pass on to political activists today?

Y. The lessons are that sometimes some of them have a tendency (perhaps I did when I was younger) to think that the revolution should have happened yesterday. There may be many tomorrows. You have to work with the people, and you have to discuss their needs, not just your own needs, and see it from a wider perspective than just a narrow path; and that things do not happen overnight. It takes a long period of working for an objective, and if it's the right one, eventually you'll get it.

K. What role do you see older citizens playing in social change? You are playing a role.

Y. Well, you have to remember too that older citizens come from different backgrounds and that not all of them have been or will become political in their activities. You have many men and women who are collecting social security and don't know how it came about, and they have to be told the history of how social security came ^{into being} ~~about~~, how it can be enhanced, and the need for health coverage. I was hospitalized for thirteen days. The bill is now over four thousand dollars ~~and it has~~ and all of it isn't in yet. Now, how, with the medicaid just paying a certain amount of it, and if you don't have any outside insurance, because we happen to

Y. have health coverage, we are ^{among} the fortunate ones, so it isn't that I am saying ^{this} for myself. But I think in the end there just may be a bill of one hundred and twenty five dollars that we will have to take care of if Kaiser doesn't take care of it. ~~And~~ I understand that they will because it happened away from home and I was in a different hospital. But what of older citizens who just have medicare ^{and} ~~which is now~~ what they are ^{have} ~~going~~ to pay back per day. They have to take off so much for the first visit, or the first day, or the second day, with ^{costs at} three hundred dollars a day. What are they going to do when their funds are limited. And why should this nation, with all its wealth, be so behind in health care when throughout the world nations had health care systems for their people ^{some even} before the turn of the century. It has been a birthright in fact. And here you have to battle. You hear of men and women who don't have dentures, who don't have the proper glasses because they can't afford them on their meagre income. So there is this need and you have to tell every senior citizen this fact - that ^{even if} they happen to be covered they shouldn't think there isn't some other person who isn't covered. Well, I've got it. ^{what} How happens ^{to the} the other person ^{who} doesn't have it? There are reasons why they ~~don't~~ have it.

Not all welfare recipients are fraudulent. A policeman who gets, or someone else who works for the government, welfare - that is fraudulent. But poor people, you can't say that they are all there because they lie about their needs. That is something else that the senior citizens have to learn.

K. Do you feel that younger persons appreciate the role of older Americans in radical politics?

Y. I think for a while they tended to disregard everything that is so-called history. "We don't need history - that's ancient." But more and more, ^{are} beginning to see the need to at least know that history so that they ^{don't} ~~wouldn't~~ commit some of the same errors that

- Y. others committed. It took a long process to ~~teach~~^{instruct} the labor movement that blowing up the Times Building is not going to make it better for workers whether anybody gets injured or not; that that is not the way. But of course the employers used those tactics more openly than they do now although in some instances they still use the same tactics of vicious attacks against strikers driving them out from their homes, especially if they are ⁱⁿ company towns. There are still some of those in existence, especially in the mining areas. There is a great need for a lot of changes.
- K. Do you have any relationship with the young people in the radical movement today?
- Y. There is quite a relationship, especially in our case in the Asian community, a good many, hundreds of young Asians, not just Japanese-Americans, but Filipino and Chinese who have come to Karl's ^{lectures} when in fact ~~it~~ isn't even their class which is ~~the one that's~~ having him - others have come in, have asked the instructors if they can ~~come and~~ sit in and listen to him. And often when he gets through they say, "Oh, gee, I've got a sister who is in high school, and I'll bet her class would like to hear you. Can we have your address so she can get in touch with you?" So ~~that~~ they do want to learn. They are beginning to understand that there is a long history of especially ^{among} foreign born workers to attain some semblance of respectability, quote, unquote. In other words, a living wage, better living conditions, do away with the ghettos that exist and the reasons for the ghettos, and how we have to fight against them. I don't care whether it is in a little town or Japan-town, or whatever you have ~~to~~ call it, the ghettos have got to be eliminated.
- K. How do young women respond to an older woman in the radical movement?
- Y. Well some of them say, "Gee Whiz [laughter] really" when I tell them, for instance, that Karl and I lived in so called sin because we couldn't get legally married in California until we were able to borrow

- Y. money to go to another state and get married. They think it just a now thing that so and so is living with so and so, so that "really". And telling them of some of the struggles that we had in trying to find a decent place where to live, and having to move out of a place once we had moved in although the manager knew that we were a mixed couple, and in a month giving us our walking papers, and trying to look for another place. Some of them think it didn't happen, it's just something new now, and telling them of the struggle. And some of them say, "Gee, how do you keep looking this young, you are seventy-one you say, and how do you look this young." And we tell them that we feel we have lived a good life and that we have a goal to obtain and that we feel that we are working towards it, and it gives us an uplift that we feel that we haven't given up the ghost; that we are still in there pitching and fighting regardless of the fact that we are among so called better situated senior citizens because of having belonged to unions, getting pensions that the unions negotiated, and in our case also our health and welfare coverage.
- K. Let's see, what else - What do you see in the future for American radicalism?
- Y. Well, I think if Carter keeps on doing what he is doing there is going to be a heck of a lot of radicalization among the younger people because he certainly has not lived up to any of his campaign promises. He has sniped away at the B-1 and a lot of young people are interested in what's going to happen ~~to~~ that. The use of atomic energy and not harnessing it, and the, oh all the different things that he has been doing, and some of the statements he has made. He certainly hasn't done anything for the unemployed in this nation, and while they say it has gone down it is because people have exhausted their unemployed benefits and they are not even a statistic anymore. They are no longer on the rolls, so that a lot of them are learning that truth, saying

- Y. that unemployment had dropped by one percent or two percent, and that's the only reason ~~that~~ it ~~has dropped by that~~, because ^{for} the unemployed ranks are growing as the young^{sters} reach their employable age, and ^{there are} no jobs for them. There are a lot of other causes that might follow ~~into it~~ -- some of the issues that Carter has not, or the fellows he has around him, ^{have ignored}. So far his actions show that he is more on the big business side in trying to get them breaks than he is for the ordinary citizen.
- K. That's not the future of American radicalism though.
- K. That's going to help. It isn't the future, but it's going to help radicalize, I feel, a large strata in this nation so that they can pick it up from there and go on. I feel they will be more open to listen to people and not shy away in that sense. Not by reading a newspaper and saying Carter has done this or not done this, but they will listen and explore and try to get information. It is shown, I think, by the fact that there are more and more readers daily to the Daily World and to the People's World, constantly the ^{numbers} ~~tells~~ are growing. In some areas where there never was a sub there are now several subs [subscriptions], not just in San Francisco.
- K. Now, we didn't go into your trade union activities at all. We just went up to the War [World War II] but you are a trade union person and have been very active in trade unions in the past period of time which we haven't covered, and I want to know what you think of the future of trade unionism in America.
- Y. I think we are going to reach a period where Meany and some of these old time labor leaders, some call them bosses, will no longer be on the scene. In election after election there are large votes for men and women who have a program to better the lot of the workers in their industries. You see more and

Y. ^{such} more men and women elected on executive boards and different positions within locals, not so much on international bodies, but in local bodies, [redacted] In our own, I am a member of the O.P.E.U. [Office and Professional Employees Union], ^{Local 29} a local that was under trusteeship* for the full length of what the federal law allows [redacted] and we weren't in trusteeship ^{for a while} and then in trusteeship again, so that it was quite a long period in trusteeship, and yet after this whole period when a struggle went on on issues within the union, when we had the election ^{after} the latest trusteeship was ended nineteen out of twenty one on ^{the anti trusteeship slate were elected as officers and} executive board ^{members} so that shows that there is some progress being made. And at our international convention just held this month one of our twenty nine elected officers gave them a run for their money in running for regional director. So I think there is hope, especially for office workers who are always considered people you couldn't organize. Just last Thursday Local 29 got fourteen hundred members in Blue Cross. We won two to one in that election [National Labor Relations Board election]. And this was despite the fact that there were attacks on the leadership of our local, being called "red" and everything else, because there is ^{need for a union} [redacted] People are not advancing. Maybe one or two get high positions, put their legs up on a desk, but [redacted] overall workers are not getting their just dues.

* A local union is placed under "trusteeship" when the International (the parent body) feels it can no longer handle its own affairs. The trusteeship lasts either as long as the International feels this is necessary, or to the total period the government allows - 18 months at a stretch.

Y. in the amount of work, ~~now pay to cover the cost of living~~
~~increase.~~

K. Why do you think the trade union movement is worth while. No, I am putting words in your mouth - do you think there is hope, then?

Y. Of course.

K. Within the structure?

Y. There are a lot of groups tripe^{to} splinter the labor movement and getting up so called independent groups because they say they can't work within the ranks of labor, and in the end they find themselves at a loss, in ~~small~~ ^{these} groups. Do ~~they~~ ^{they} have a right to negotiate with an employer if he has got to figure an overall group that he can negotiate with, and try to put obstacles in the way. And the question of pension funds and health and welfare benefits. If they are splintered they are not going to get that kind of ^{proper} coverage because a small group cannot build up a ^{good} pension fund. For a while I was in an independent union with headquarters in New York. This was in the ~~late~~ ^{late} fifties and and it was just impossible to keep up with the growing trend of benefits because we had such a small group. Say you had thirty in the group and you are going to get a policy, you are not going to get the same policy ~~as~~ you have four thousand under. You are not going to get the same benefits. Also I think there is hope in working and fighting to clean up those messes that certain unions have who have control over the well being of thousands of workers. I think it behooves us to try to stay within those unions and fight ~~to~~ ^{them} clean up ~~and~~ ¹ and expose the ~~misleaders~~ ^{misleaders} if they try any of their shennigans.

End of tape

Interview with Elaine Black Yoneda - second series
Date of interview - June 24, 1977
367 Elsie St, SF Cal.

Tape Eight

K. OK, Elaine, there is a theory that has been advanced about trade unions which is that trade unions have become so corrupt that it is impossible to get ahold of them anymore from the ground up, and that unions should go back to the principles they espoused in the thirties like wages, hours and working conditions and let things like pension plans and extra curricular things go by the board, and union would be better for this; that new unions should be started instead of going along with the old entrenched unionism. What do you think about this?

Y. I don't agree with that premise because I feel that where there are established unions it behooves the rank and file to keep on top of what's happening and try to clean up the messes.

Now as far as pensions and welfare, I believe there are a couple of million men and women (more than that) who are on union pensions. How would they get along with just social security? They would be way below the poverty level, and their families, if they didn't have union pensions along with social security. Where would those be who did not have health coverage which the employer negotiated jointly with trustees of the union side to have certain coverages under certain plans. Of course you will always find somebody who will try to make a fast buck, a consultant or whatever titles they get, and milk off the top. Well they have not been able to do that, for instance, in the Longshore pension and health and welfare fund. There has never been a charge ^{against} the I.L.W.U. of any corruption in those funds. And other unions should take that example as to how they have managed to keep their administrative costs and other things down to a specific amount, and that's it. Although it is

- Y. not perfect, there could be certain corrections made there where they have a top heavy administrative staff and have cut down their office staff to almost a minimum, and have one administrator for maybe three workers. At one point it was even more than that, I think one supervisor to one and one half workers. But it can be controlled if the rank and file will come to union meetings and not be afraid to speak. Of course ^{at} times it might mean a split head in some of the unions, but you can't give up. Because you can negotiate a health and welfare program or a death benefit with insurance companies where you have a big mass instead of individuals. So that a lot of workers who don't have ~~that~~ that type of coverage, and they are left without or would have to pay twice as much or three times as much as an individual. I think it would be good to look in and see what longshoremen pay per month for their health and welfare to Kaiser and their alternate plan (They have a choice between Kaiser and an insurance company. They are not told which to choose) and see what they would charge an individual. And where do you get that type of service? You don't. You pay more per month as an individual and not get the same.
- K. Well the kids today are saying to heck with this. We want to determine our own future. Some of them are saying to hell with the welfare funds.
- Y. But the employer won't give you that fringe benefit in your paycheck. He won't give it to you. If it's not spelled out that it's a fringe benefit, whatever he pays into the pension fund, if it's all contributory, or the amount that he pays in and the amount that you pay in, he won't give it to you.
- K. This is what you'd tell them then?
- Y. That's what I said. They won't. They won't. They would fight it tooth and nail. They would never give you that two dollars or whatever it is in your case per hour, or even per day. It will go into their pockets. And they get plenty in their pockets. So why give it to them. That's one of the premises that I believe in

Y. because they certainly would fight that tooth and nail. Now whether the new federal law governing pensions, how they are going to be maintained - of course we do know companies suddenly go out of business so they don't have to pay pensions and they come up with another name. But that again has to be fought for. If you want certain laws enacted by congress you petition them to see whether or not you can get it. If a politician promises you something don't let him or her forget it. Keep on their tail and say, look this is what you said. A lot of these guys have voted themselves heavy increases and then have done nothing to make jobs, that they better get off their butts and do something.

K. For a radical you sound like you can work within the structure of the government very well.

Y. I would like to see a complete change. But it is not going to come tomorrow, so that what I see right now can be obtained by certain actions and demands. Certain actions and demands brought about the end of the Vietnam war. It wasn't because they suddenly got tired of it in Washington. It was the people speaking out, and the same people should be aroused to speak out on unemployment and all these other things that are bad for the overall people.

Some of the other things I should mention. Racism is still so prevalent in this country, which brings about conditions that the employer can use specifically by dividing one group - divide and rule is still with us. It's for their pockets, and you have them taking new immigrants and putting them especially in electronics and paying them barely the minimum, and the long hours and what have you, and saying, well if you're not going to do it I'll get someone else - If it's a Phillipino workers they will say they'll get a Vietnamese; and if it's Vietnamese they will try to say it's the Blacks they'll get to work for less. And unless we all get together and

Y. fight racism, fight all these things that make more profits for the employers rather than help the workers who are the majority. And maybe reformism, revisionism, or whatever some people might want to call it, but while we are struggling for our ultimate aim we also have to try to make things a bit more bearable.

K. What do you think of the feminist movement today?

Y. Some of it I can agree with and some of it I just look the other way.

K. What do you agree with?

Y. I agree that women should get equal pay for equal work; that they be given administrative positions if they are capable of it; that the fact that some bank or other might have a woman who is vice-president and sit down and smoke her cigar or whatever she wants to smoke that does not make it better for the overall woman; that the need ~~is~~ I think there should be a stronger fight for child care centers that have parental as well as professional people working together. It should ~~not~~ be left to - there are so few of the working women able to adjust their hours for child care purposes where there happens to be a child care center. And the cost in many instances is prohibitive. Many of the women are still just working for the minimum wage. So I just don't see ~~any~~ spotty campaigns for child care. It needs a consistent campaign which I think is very important to life in this society today. I know that when Tommy was small and I was working the fact that ~~it~~ I wasn't able to find a child care center except having him commute with me was a drawback and was a drain on his health as well as other activities, so I am sure the same is true today, especially if women have two to three children and have to go out and work in order to be able to put some food on the table at today's inflationary prices, even if they

Y. have a spouse. But the thing of saying it's the female that's going to bring this about. It's not going to be just the female that's going to bring anything about. It's going to be the joint action of male and female. So that's why when you have these feminist groups saying that we are the only ones who can do thus and thus, I don't agree with them. I think it's joint endeavor.

K. What do you think about the fight for the equal rights amendment?

Y. The equal rights amendment I think has shown up to be at fault here in the State of California. When they passed it here all the protective legislation that we've had on the board since nineteen thirteen that governed minors, which meant children, and women - instead of being extended to men like the rest periods, the couches to lie down, the amount of weight they can lift - instead of being extended to men were taken away. A fight has had to be conducted and some of it has been re-instituted and some of it hasn't since most of the people aren't in unions and are not working in industries that are unionized they need these protective measures. They need a minimum wage that's decent. They need rest periods. So, unless you have a union contract, which spells out a rest period, they don't have to give it do you now. But the women at least had it, and ~~lost~~ the fight to extend it. The organization I belong to, Union Wage, was fighting for that, to be extended. Now we have to fight on all these little things to try and get them reinstituted for everybody.

K. That's the same argument that was used during the War [World War II] when they were trying to get it passed then.

Y. Sure, and it's still true. In states that have protective legislation, wherever they have endorsed the equal rights amendment, the protective legislation

Y. has gone down the drain regardless of how many years it has been in existence, so I think they didn't take that into consideration.

K. Then you are not against equal rights per se, but just against this particular amendment because of the way it is worded.

Y. The way it is worded, yes, that it does not protect any protective legislation for workers. I guess fifty years ago if (well, I was able to vote then) [laughter] I would have voted for it then without knowing there was such a thing as protective laws.

K. Do you think women working in the progressive and labor movement were more effective or less effective because they were women? During the thirties, say.

Y. There always has been, from the times of the Knights of Labor, outstanding women fighters, whether it was the mining area where it was all men who worked, but you had women like Mother Jones and Mother Bloor who were outstanding in their struggles, not against but with the miners. And in the textile workers. I think one of the first strikes we had in the United States was in the shoe industry and the other industries that went on. I have forgotten the year that was, back in eighteen something, but there have always been effective women.

K. Were they more effective because they were women, or less, do you think?

Y. I think that in some fields where man thinks that man is the sole person who can do things and that women's place is in the kitchen you found large segments of resentment. On the other hand when they got into the struggle, those who were organized, they saw that in some instances it was only their wives who could go on the picket line because there were injunctions against them being on the picket line. So the women and children were about the only resource they had. And example of that is the Colorado strike against Rockefeller's coal mines there were quite a number of women who were killed

Y. in Ludlow, Colorado. If you look at the roster men, women and children were killed in that holocaust, attacked by company thugs. They were living right there in the camps with their husbands because they had been driven out of the company towns. So if you go and dig into history you will find that women have played a role, even if they were staying home, sticking by the men, sticking by the union, so -

I know I ~~rambled~~ an awful lot. These last questions I hadn't thought out.

K. No. I want your gut reaction to them.

K. What would you say was the most difficult and unsatisfying time of your life?

Y. I have already indicated that my life with Ed was unsatisfying; that we differed. It was unnecessary, but it did happen. And of course too the fact that I finally acquiesced to the evacuation although I knew it was a violation of basic civil rights. I didn't speak out against it, although I would not have fought it physically. But the fact ~~that~~ I didn't raise my voice in protest. In fact I really thought for a period that they weren't really concentration camps. Of course to me concentration camps was the oven, although we did call them [Manzanar, etc.] concentration camps. Although in that period once we were in camp we did ask for some sort of hearings so that those who wanted to fight ~~the~~ axis could be given that opportunity. And that didn't come into being until after there were several meeses in some of the camps. By then, of course, we were both out of the camps. And then they did it wrong [laughter].

K. What would you say was the most satisfying time?

Y. Well, I don't know. I may still live to see some changes, so I don't know [laughter].

K. One more thing. You've had a number of interviews. What do you think of this type of interview?

Y. I think there are a lot more interesting people that have not been searched out for their stories

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Y. which would help make the whole. There are still a lot of avenues that I think have been left untold. I think a lot of what I have said to you in all these interviews and perhaps things I have said to Fullerton when the questions were asked, although Fullerton was supposed to be especially my association with the Japanese, a lot of it is meshed in there. You couldn't separate it. In the Imperial valley case there were the Japanese involved, and then all these other things, sure it comes out.

K. Well, do you have any suggestions about improving this. For instance, if I asked you what suggestions do you have for improving the particular interviews we have gone through, what would you tell me?

Y. I think since you have taken the course you yourself have seen a different perspective of how to go about it. It has been an improvement. I personally do a lot of rambling. I think I am not the best type of person to be interviewed.

K. Oh, I don't know about that.

Y. Hopefully this will give some help to some of the future generations who will feel the need to find out what it was like or what it was all about. I think there are a number of men and women in this area who are still alive today who were part of that era who have stories much -

K. I don't think that's so [laughter].
Thaks a lot - I guess I -

end of interview

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